

Hannibal's Strategies

During the Second Carthaginian War with Rome & His Ultimate Goal of Roman Subjugation

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Hannibal Barca

Introduction

After the battle of Cannae, Hannibal retired to the confines of his camp to celebrate the greatest defeat the Romans had ever suffered, and as the future would hold, *anyone* would suffer.

“Hannibal’s officers crowded round him with congratulations on his victory. The others all advised him, now that he had brought so great a war to a conclusion, to repose and allow his weary soldiers to rest for the remainder of that day and the following night. But Maharbal, the commander of the cavalry, held that no time should be lost. ‘Nay,’ he cried, ‘that you may realize what has been accomplished by this battle, in five days you shall banquet in the Capitol! Follow after; I will precede you with the cavalry, that the Romans may know that you are there before they know that you are coming!’ To Hannibal the idea was too joyous and vast for his mind at once to grasp it. And so, while praising Maharbal’s goodwill, he declared that he must have time to deliberate regarding his advice. Then said Maharbal, ‘In very truth the gods bestow not on the same man all their gifts; you know how to gain a victory, Hannibal; you know not how to use one.’ That day’s delay is generally believed to have saved the City and the empire.”¹

¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, Vol. V, trans. B.O. Foster, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), 22.51.1-4. “Hannibali victori cum ceteri circumfusi gratularentur suaderenque ut tanto perfunctus bello diei quod reliquum esset noctisque insequentis quietem et ipse sibi sumeret et fessis daret militibus, Maharbal praefectus equitum minime cessandum ratus, ‘Immo, ut quid hac pugna sit actum scias, die quinto’ inquit ‘victor in Capitolio epulaberis. Sequere; cum equite, ut prius venisse quam venturum sciant, praecedam.’ Hannibali nimis laeta res est visa maiorque quam ut eam statim capere animo posset. Itaque voluntatem se laudare Maharbalis ait; ad consilium pensandum temporis opus esse. Tum Maharbal: ‘Non omnia nimirum eidem di dedere: vincere scis, Hannibal, victoria uti nescis.’ Mora eius diei satis creditur saluti fuisse urbi atque imperio.”

Although this picture so vividly portrayed by Livy, may never have happened, the point of why Hannibal did not simply crush what remained of the Roman polity and people is one that has perplexed historians since the battle itself. The passage, however, highlights the fact that the war between Hannibal and Rome cannot be understood unless Hannibal's actions and thinking are explained. Our sources inevitably reflect a Roman perspective, although some Carthaginian material may have been used, and these sources make assumptions about Hannibal's actions, which need to be scrutinized. Little is known of Hannibal, the details of his actions, the circumstances of many of his deeds, let alone his motivations. As a consequence of this general lack of knowledge, all kinds of misunderstandings and myths about Hannibal abound. Further, these misconceptions have broader implications for the way in which the war and Carthage are conceived and understood during the 2nd Punic War.

The overall objective of this study is to argue that Hannibal did not have a single strategy for the conduct of his war with Rome. It will be demonstrated that Hannibal's ambition was not driven by one set "grand design", present from the start and systematically worked out, but that it changed at least two times, as an evolving process of pragmatic opportunism. It will be argued that the Hannibal's thinking should be seen to consist of at least three distinct and evolving strategies:

- 1) As the war began, Hannibal had no desire to destroy Rome – he wanted to subjugate Rome and/or turn Rome into an allied state of Carthage. His strategy was to isolate Rome through a blitzkrieg raid on the Roman Confederation.
- 2) After Cannae Hannibal's strategy changed to a defensive rather than offensive posture, designed to outlast the Roman military until

reinforcements could be sent either from Carthage or Philip of Macedon.

- 3) After returning to Africa, Hannibal's strategy changed once again to become a policy of damage control and, later, as his country's political spokesman, to keep Carthage intact.

In order to prove my theory of multiple strategies, it is my contention that this cannot be done unless such an analysis is embedded in an understanding of Carthage and Carthaginian society before and during the Hannibalic period. The need is to reconstruct Hannibal's strategic thinking and actions in its own terms. The principal problem with this is that the surviving sources present matters from a Roman perspective, even when in some cases information may have been derived from Carthaginian sources. Hannibal is largely presented as the foil of the Romans. Hannibal's strategic thinking is reconstructed in the sources primarily to explain Roman actions. However, the second war between Rome and Carthage will never be properly understood without attempting to see it from a Carthaginian point of view. To achieve this I have concentrated on the primary sources rather than modern scholarly work, much of which shares the Roman perspective of the sources. Secondly I have sought to reconstruct Hannibal's strategies from his actions, because the historicity of many of the passages where Hannibal or others discuss his strategies may be doubted, as in the case of the incident with which this introduction begins. Finally I have sought to exploit comparative material from a better documented war, the American War Between the States, to help with the reconstruction. Such material, of course cannot be used to prove my reconstruction of Hannibal's strategy, but I argue that it suggests ways of understanding the actions of generals and demonstrates the certain strategies are possible.

Modern scholars have a variety of assessments of Hannibal's actual goal along with his strategy for accomplishing that goal. Brian Caven, Nigel Bagnall, John Prevas, and John Lazenby all agree that making the western Mediterranean permanently safe for the Carthaginians was Hannibal's central goal and that the strategy for accomplishing the task first begins with a blitzkrieg attack on the Italian mainland that results in the break up of the Roman Alliance System.² However, these and many other scholars differ as to the actual means for breaking up the confederation and most hold Hannibal had only this one plan for his war effort. Prevas believed the alliance would dissolve if Roman authority were challenged, causing members states to revolt; with the legions tied up on the mainland suppressing insurrections, Hannibal's army would be the catalyst in a reaction that would destroy Rome from within. Caven on the other hand stipulates Hannibal confidently expected to overthrow the Italian confederation.³ Lazenby maintains Hannibal's strategy was based on the hope that he could seduce the allies by fear or favour, if not to fight for him, at least to remain neutral.⁴ Serge Lancel adds the hypothesis that Hannibal need only play on the multiplicity of status among the Roman allies to sow confusion.⁵ Yet Bagnall asserts Hannibal's operational aim was to destroy the Roman army, which he saw as the cohesive force holding the Italian confederation together.⁶ Although each hypothesis has merit, the outcome remains the same: Hannibal had one plan for conducting his war with Rome; i.e., one strategy of breaking up the

² B. Caven, The Punic Wars (New York, 1980), page 95; N. Bagnall, The Punic Wars (London, 1990), page 330; J. Prevas, Hannibal Crosses the Alps: The Enigma Re-examined (New York, 1998), page 4; & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War: A History of the Second Punic War (Warminster, 1978), page 10.

³ J. Prevas, Hannibal Crosses the Alps, page 4.

⁴ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 10.

⁵ S. Lancel, Hannibal, trans. A Nevill (Oxford, 1998), page 81.

⁶ N. Bagnall, The Punic Wars, page 330.

Roman Alliance System. Lancel, Caven, and Lazenby agree Hannibal continued the policy he had chosen at the outset to destroy the power of Rome through intense diplomatic activity in southern Italy, while Baker and Cottrell, conclude Hannibal had no conclusive strategy after Cannae and Bradford points to Hannibal's belief that Rome should have surrendered after such devastating defeats was a false sense of the conduct of war. Overwhelmingly, all believe Hannibal's strategy was flawed.⁷

Only two scholars, Bagnall and Lancel, indicate Hannibal *may* have indeed had more than one strategy, changing tactically from an offensive to a defensive position after the first two years of the war, As Hannibal's victories won over an increasing number of Rome's allies, Hannibal was forced to wage a defensive strategy in order to protect these defecting allies while waiting for Carthage to either send reinforcements or widen the area of conflict to include Spain, Sardinia, and Sicily.⁸ I have found no indication that any previous scholar thought of Hannibal's return to Africa as a strategy, let alone a third one. Most saw it as his being forced to defend the city on the orders of the Carthaginian senate.

Hannibal based the first strategy on manoeuvrability of his troops to maintain the offensive in hopes Rome would agree to a negotiated peace; the second defensive strategy included holding the territory and allies gained while reinforcements were brought from Carthage and/or Illyria. Additionally, his objective changed for a second time from wanting to reverse the situation arisen from the treaties of 241 and 237 to a strategy of actually preserving Carthage's current power in the western Mediterranean.

⁷ S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 109; B. Caven, The Punic Wars, page 141; J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 85-87; G.P. Baker, Hannibal (London, 1930), page 144; L. Cottrell, Hannibal: Enemy of Rome (New York, 1961), pages 146-147; & E. Bradford, Hannibal (London, 1981), pages 125 & 130.

⁸ N. Bagnall, The Punic Wars, page 330 & S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 110.

Care has to be taken in the use of primary sources. On the whole the reconstruction of Hannibal's strategic thinking is based upon the events described in the sources rather than what those involved are supposed to have said or upon the strategies which are ascribed by our sources to individual players. The point here is that it is perfectly possible for a historian, such as Polybius, to preserve correctly what Hannibal may have said on any occasion and to make use of eye-witness testimony. But given that there is no analytical technique to discriminate with any certainty a remark which was actually made from words put in the mouth of the player by the historian, and given the propensity of historians to put their own ideas in the mouths of historical characters, it is best not to use such evidence in reconstructing actual strategic thinking. For instance, despite what Livy and even Polybius imply, I will assert that an attack on the city of Rome never formed a part of Hannibal's strategy. If he had marched on the city in 216 B.C. he would have departed areas in which he hoped to win allies and entered into the heartland of the Roman confederacy.⁹ With two legions raised at the beginning of 216, Marcellus' 1500 men at Ostia plus the marines he sent to Teanum Sidicinum, along with the able-bodied civilians of Rome, it is unlikely that Hannibal would have been able to take the city in a daring frontal attack.¹⁰ Consequently, he most certainly would have had to engage in a protracted siege, which would have laid him open to the risk of being trapped in the vicinity of the city by the overwhelming forces Rome could rapidly raise. Although he might have won in the end, this method of warfare was not where his strength lay.¹¹ For these reasons, I propose the wrong question has been asked.

⁹ J.F. Lazenby, "Was Maharbal Right?", *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal*, BICS Supplement 67, 1996, pages 41-42.

¹⁰ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 23.14.2 & 22.57.7-8,9.

¹¹ J.F. Lazenby, "Was Maharbal Right?", page 41.

Much that has been written about Hannibal by the Greek and Roman classical writers falls short of what we might consider the “truth” for any attempt to view the war from Hannibal’s perspective suffers in particular from the utter silence of the Carthaginians. We are fortunate to have the writings of the Greek historian Polybius. Although his work does not survive in a complete text, he lived in a period of time where he could interview eyewitnesses of the war.¹² The sources for his knowledge came from first-hand oral reports; personally following Hannibal’s route through the Alps as he understood it; touring various battle sites; visiting monuments erected by people involved in the war; and from official documents seen by him, which would not have been many. Against Polybius’ word, and illustrating the possibility bias to the Romans, he was a Greek political prisoner of the Scipio family. As a friend and protégé of Scipio Aemilianus who led the Romans against Carthage in the third war, Polybius had first-hand knowledge. He wrote a 40-volume account of the growth of Roman power from the beginning of the first war with Carthage, culminating with Carthage’s destruction by Rome in the third war. The few books, which survive include his account of the second war with Hannibal. After the Romans destroyed the Achaean Federation, Polybius, an Achaean nobleman, was forced into the service of the Scipio family.¹³ His connection to the family allowed him access to treaties between Rome and Carthage now lost,¹⁴ the inscription set up by Hannibal on the Cape Lacinium promontory,¹⁵ and Scipio Africanus’

¹² Polybius, The Histories, 3.48.2 & 4.2.2.

¹³ E. Bradford, Hannibal, page xvi.

¹⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.22.7.

¹⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.33.18.

letter to Philip of Macedon detailing his reasons for attacking Carthago Nova.¹⁶ Additionally, Polybius made use of earlier historians' work, such as Q. Fabius Pictor,¹⁷ Philinus, and Silenus.

Polybius confines largely his narrative to political and military events, their causes and effects. Although more objective than Livy in his picture of Hannibal and nearer the truth of the events than later Roman writers, he clearly had his prejudices due to his association with the Scipio family. Yet for the war with Hannibal there is no way that Polybius can be any better than his sources. How much can you actually take at face value from the average soldier's point of view? For instance, just because an infantryman knows where his army deployed and what events took place, it does not necessarily mean he knows why the officers requested the implementation of these events. In other words what a soldier is told by his leader is not necessarily what is actually taking place. The oral histories that played a significant part in Polybius' work were not just personal accounts of soldiers, but also accounts of civilians who were in the cities, those who: witnessed the passing of Hannibal's army; would have seen a battle; or would have been a resident of one of the cities taken over by him. Subconsciously, as Romans or under Roman rule themselves, witnesses may have wanted to put as much distance between Hannibal and his uniqueness as possible, because he was incomprehensible as a Roman figure. Many held strong Carthaginian prejudices for their assessment of him. Contemporary perceptions of his barbarism, cunning, or treachery were repeated over and over, again, embellished and elaborated until transfigured into fact. Again, it is

¹⁶ Polybius, The Histories, Vol. IV, trans. W.R. Paton, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1925), 10.9.3.

¹⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.8.1.

problematical to take these facts at face value, for unless he found contradictory evidence, Polybius had no real reason to doubt their veracity.

Of the later Roman historians, Livy is by far the most important writer of Hannibal and the 2nd Punic War, or as I prefer to call it, the 2nd Roman War. An artistic client and friend of Augustus and colleague of the future emperor Claudius, he wrote an annalistic history of Rome beginning with its origins until 9 B.C. Livy's aim in writing his 142-volume history – 35 of which survive – was to show the causes and process of Rome's rise to its current imminence.¹⁸ Q. Fabius Pictor's influence on Livy is profound and can be seen in the far-reaching patriotic inaccuracies detected in his writings.¹⁹ For example, his dating of the siege of Saguntum in 219 instead of 218 must have originated to minimize Rome's neglect of her "friend" by emphasizing the so-called suddenness of the attack and capture of Saguntum, and by implying that Rome had no time to send help. Writing nearly 200 years after the 2nd Roman War, his work is studded with speeches by the main characters in each event, ostensibly passages recorded as a historical testimony of the event, but actually fictional depictions to make the story more understandable to his Roman audience and, perhaps more important at the time, entertaining. Considering his friend Virgil's work, *The Aeneid*, as fact, Livy designed his authorial commentaries to dignify the subsequent hostility between the two cities and to demonstrate the qualities of honour that enabled the Romans to defeat the Carthaginians.²⁰ Although Livy would have been privy to official records due to his friendship with the emperor, we do not know what goals or perspectives his sources had – he rarely mentions them – and he was

¹⁸ E. Bradford, *Hannibal*, pages xvi – xvii.

¹⁹ P.G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge, 1961), page 119.

²⁰ P.G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods*, page 10-11.

writing his entire history as a glorification of Rome to be presented to that very same emperor.

Although writings from both Polybius and Livy have been lost, surviving text by Polybius covers the early part of the war with Hannibal while Livy's work covers the later period. There is some overlap in the middle years, which provides an interesting balance between the two. Even though Polybius may not have had access to official Roman documents, Livy did due to his connections. Consequently the number of Romans killed in battle or taken prisoner should be considered accurate since Livy had no reason to make the losses look smaller and may be as reliable as Polybius who had access to first-hand accounts. In addition Livy relies on Polybius' earlier work even though he cites Polybius by name only once. When individual passages of the two writers are compared, it is evident he uses Polybius as a reference as early as Book XXI where Livy records an alternate version of the chronology of the siege of Saguntum coinciding with Polybius' account.²¹ The statistics for Hannibal's army cited by Livy contain one estimate identical with Polybius' account from the Lacinium inscription.²² There are other points in Livy's work regarding the Italian and Spanish campaigns, which coincide with Polybius' accounts.²³ It is also notable that Coelius Antipater is cited four times in Livy's books.²⁴ Coelius and Polybius used the same sources for the 2nd Roman War – Silenus for the African viewpoint, and Fabius Pictor for the Roman.²⁵

²¹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.15.3 & Polybius, The Histories, 3.17.

²² Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.38.2 & Polybius, The Histories, 3.33.

²³ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.19.2ff & Polybius, The Histories, 3.29, 3.107, & 10.7.1.

²⁴ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.38.7, 21.46.10, 21.47.4, & 22.31.8.

²⁵ Coelius' use of Silenus, Cicero, De Re Publica, Vol. XVI, trans. C.W. Keyes, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), 1.24.49; & Polybius on Fabius, The Histories, 1.14.1.

There was a large number of histories of the war with Hannibal, which directly or indirectly could have been, and clearly were, used by surviving sources such as Polybius and Livy “Many have produced histories of the events of this war”.²⁶ Of particular importance for our purposes would be those written from a Carthaginian point of view. Many such works which are alluded to by later writers are either unnamed or are nothing more than names — Eumachus of Naples and a certain Xenophon.²⁷ Even more tantalising is the evidence that Hannibal wrote works himself in Greek. Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 13.2 talks of “a number of books in Greek”, but the only specific work he cites has nothing to do with the war with Rome. It was an address to the Rhodians about the marauding activities of the Roman general, Gnaeus Manlius Vulso in Asia in 189-188 B.C. It would be nice to think he wrote military memoirs, but there is no such evidence, and, indeed, if there had been anything like this they surely would have been cited. However, it is clear that Hannibal, like many Hellenistic kings, included historians in his entourage on campaign. Silenus of Kaleakte²⁸ and Sosylus of Lacedaemon,²⁹ the latter Hannibal’s Greek teacher, are stated by Nepos³⁰ as having accompanied Hannibal on his campaigns. Sosylus wrote a work of seven books,³¹ which was known to Polybius. Polybius links Sosylus with another historian, Chaereas,³² and attacks them both: “in my

²⁶ Cornelius Nepos, *Great Generals of Foreign Nations*, *Hannibal*, trans. J.C. Rolfe, LCL (Cambridge, MA, 1929) 13.3.

²⁷ F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker* (1923-) (*FGrH*) 178 and 179.

²⁸ F. Jacoby, (*FGrH*) 175.

²⁹ F. Jacoby, (*FGrH*) 176.

³⁰ Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 13.3.

³¹ Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, trans. F.R. Walton, Vol. XI, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1957) 26.4.

³² F. Jacoby, (*FGrH*) 177.

opinion they rank in authority not with history, but with the common gossip of the barber's shop".³³ The context of Polybius' attack is his dismissal of those sources which had a full scale debate in the Roman Senate, when the news of the fall of Saguntum reached them, a debate in which arguments were put for against going to war. That debate is certainly reflected in the tradition³⁴ and it is far from clear that Polybius is right to be so dismissive of Sosylus and Chaereas. It is worth noting that the only substantial fragment of Sosylus to survive seems to be an unsensational and detailed account of a naval engagement at the mouth of the Ebro.³⁵ So at least one of the writers of the war from a Carthaginian point of view, Sosylus was in a position to have regular access to Hannibal and, perhaps, to have direct knowledge of his thinking and his work may have been less fanciful than Polybius reckoned. But, even so, it is impossible to ascribe any bit of the claims made in our surviving sources about Hannibal's strategic thinking to any of these writers for certain.

A little bit more can be made of Silenus of Kaleakte. His work may well have reflected insider knowledge based upon his presence on campaign with Hannibal. Cicero's assessment of him was favourable.³⁶ Silenus was the source for the famous story of Hannibal's dream. The account got into the sources, probably through the Roman

³³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.20.5.

³⁴ Cassius Dio, Roman History, trans. E. Cary, Vol. II, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1914) Fragment 55.

³⁵ F. Jacoby, (*FGrH*) 176 F.1, on a Wurzburg Papyrus.

³⁶ "... he was a very painstaking student of Hannibal's career...", *is autem diligentissime res Hannibalis persecutus est*, Cicero, De Senectute: De Amicitia: De Divinatione, trans. W.A. Falconer, Vol. XX, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1923) 1.49.

historian, Coelius Antipater and there are a variety of versions of it.³⁷ But the most famous is cited by Cicero.³⁸ After the capture of Saguntum Hannibal dreamed that Jupiter summoned him to a council of the gods, where he was ordered by Jupiter to carry the war into Italy. Jupiter gave him one of the gods as a guide. This guide told Hannibal not to look back while on the march; but Hannibal, overcome by curiosity, does look back and sees a terrible monster destroying everything. Hannibal asks his guide what the monster was and was informed that it was the destruction of Italy (*vastitatem Italiae*). The guide told him to press on and not to worry about what happened behind him. Livy significantly locates the dream just at the point that Hannibal is to cross the Ebro.³⁹ Some modern authorities argue that the significance of the dream was that Hannibal is seen as transgressing divine authority by looking back and that the monster is an indication of the ultimate fruitlessness of the Italian campaign.⁴⁰ But this is a very unlikely reconstruction. Livy says that “Hannibal was delighted by his dream”.⁴¹ Much more likely Silenus seeks to represent Hannibal as a general favoured by the gods with the dream vindicating the decision to cross the Ebro and march to Italy. Indeed, it is possible that this favour and protection of the gods was a theme in Silenus work. When Polybius attacks the writers who exaggerated the problems of crossing the Alps,⁴² he says that they were like writers of tragic plays, whose plots can only be brought to a close by the intervention of a *deus ex machina*: “these writers face the same problem and so invent the appearance of heroes

³⁷ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.22.5-9, Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 13.56, Silius Italicus, *Punica*, trans. J.D. Duff, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1934) 3.163ff.

³⁸ Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.49.

³⁹ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.22.5.

⁴⁰ E. Meyer, *Kleine Schriften*, II, 1924, 369 and F. Jacoby in his commentary on the fragment in *FGrH* 175.

⁴¹ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.23.1.

⁴² Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.47.6ff

and gods”. It is likely that the reference is to Silenus.⁴³ What can be made of the dream story, which significantly Polybius ignores? On the one hand, there is no doubt that people in the ancient world took dreams seriously as communication with the gods. So it is possible that Silenus is recording an actual dream told to him by Hannibal and to suggest that Hannibal at the Ebro was both aware of the likely outcome of his march – the devastation of Italy – and was also determined not to worry about the problems of securing his lines of communication and supply back to Spain.⁴⁴ Indeed, perhaps this was the reason for Hannibal announcing that he had had the dream. He wanted to bring an end to caution among some of his staff. This involves taking the dream seriously. On the other hand, dreams by generals before battles are a constant theme of ancient military narratives, compare for example Constantine’s dream before the Milvian Bridge, and so the account may owe more to Silenus using the conventional embellishments of Greek Historians rather than to any fact. So it is possible to get an indication of some strategic thinking from this one fragment. But so much doubt surrounds even this. My investigation of the possible Carthaginian sources for material about Hannibal’s thinking in the surviving accounts does not indicate that there is a fruitful way of discovering what Hannibal actually thought, even if some of the material comes from sources that were present on campaign with him.

We learn of what Hannibal or any other Carthaginian said or thought only from their enemies, or those sympathetic to their enemies. As seen in the opening passage of our introduction Livy liberally makes assumptions about Hannibal and his tactics. How did Livy know what had been said after Cannae? The solution is simple – he made it up to explain what happened from a Roman point of view. What might the Romans have

⁴³ This is well argued by K. Meister, “Annibale in Sileno”, *Maia* 23 (1971) 1-9.

⁴⁴ Is this the moral of the “looking back” part of the dream?

known about the Carthaginians? How did they get this information: from spies, informers, spoken languages?⁴⁵ Hannibal was educated by a Greek, and influenced in many ways by his knowledge of Alexander and Pyrrhus. We cannot be sure what is derived from Carthaginian or Greek sources in these Roman texts. The point is if it was not recorded, historians had to explain Hannibal's behaviour by fiction. What they made up is not necessarily correct. We must go back and use reason to understand what may have actually happened.

For the interpretation behind why Hannibal might have adopted a certain strategy, I propose that studying another general in a later time period, close to us in time allowing for detailed analysis of his actions, can lay the groundwork for the choices Hannibal made. There must be some validity to this theory as generals themselves continue to use tactics and strategies successfully executed by commanders of earlier ages. In fact, great generals do not as a rule repeat what has failed before. The manner in which wars are fought will change, but the principles of war will remain the same. Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf used Hannibal's tactics on much larger scale during the Gulf War. Gen. George Patton implemented Alexander the Great's manoeuvres extremely successfully during World War II, so much so that he believed himself to be the reincarnation of that Great Captain. The Battle of Cannae has long held attention and inspiration with commanders. During World War II, for example, Gen. von Moltke accepted Count Schlieffen's plan for the German invasion of France in 1914, yet he substituted the "idea of a Cannae" – victory through a double envelopment instead of a single one.⁴⁶ Later in the century Field Commander Erwin Rommel was not the only German officer to have

⁴⁵ Punic must have been fairly well known if Plautus used the language in his play.

⁴⁶ J.F.C. Fuller, The Conduct of War: 1789-1961 (New York, 1992), pages 155-156.

claimed he inflicted a “Cannae” on the enemy.⁴⁷ And lastly, Gen. Schwarzkopf declared he drew inspiration for his brief and devastating land offensive in Desert Storm from Cannae.⁴⁸

It is my theory that you can see into the mind of a general regardless of the time and transpose his rationale for certain actions as long as you disregard technology. Granted the further technology advances the harder it is to do this for some cultures and time periods. For ancient generals, those chosen for comparison should pre-date World War II certainly and perhaps even World War I due to the numerous inventions added during this conflict, each of which had their own impact making it that much more difficult to discern whether a general’s decision is due to the actions of his enemy, himself, or the application of an technological innovation. Essentially I intend to reexamine the character and development of Hannibal during this period, which in turn requires a theoretical reconsideration of the character of Hannibal himself by looking at another general’s approach, assessing why he engaged in a similar act to show, “this is why Hannibal would have done ____.” Explaining Hannibal’s strategies in the context of another general’s actions requires a radical revision of what has until now been written. This work is that revision.

By contrast to the lack of surviving sources or materials about the Hannibalic period, the American Civil War offers insights usually unavailable to researchers of earlier periods, into the social and political atmosphere of another era. Because the American Civil War, hereafter to be referenced as the War Between the States, can easily be used to parallel the 2nd Roman War, I will draw on General Robert E. Lee as the focus of comparison for Hannibal as well as the Confederacy and the War as a whole.. The men

⁴⁷ A. Goldsworthy, Cannae (London, 2001), page 180.

⁴⁸ A. Goldsworthy, Cannae, front cover.

of the South who participated in the war were shaped by and operated in a particular social and historical setting not unlike that of Carthage.⁴⁹ Numerous people kept diaries and verbatim accounts of events; many other accounts by cabinet members, governors, congressmen, senators, and generals, as well as their wives and aides, offer the kind of detail not customarily found in antiquity. This kind of detail allows the careful researcher to recover much of the age without distorting the facts of the history.⁵⁰

As a pre-modern war, the War Between the States was fought in line with the same mentality as Hannibal, whose thinking, in many ways, had not been used again until the mid-nineteenth century A.D. Civilization had to catch up with Hannibal's thinking. The degree to which the American war share the factors that made the 2nd Roman War so distinctive provides the primary basis for assessing the quality of the military performance of Hannibal. A comparison also sheds light on what chance Carthage had of winning by pitting the greater strength of leadership against Rome's larger forces: both wars were begun by the political manoeuvring of the enemy to make Carthage/the South the aggressor; the rapidity and decisiveness of the early campaigns give way to protracted manoeuvres and frequent sieges; and both wars are a multi-faceted blend of traditional warfare with early influences of modern warfare, which include both "total" and

⁴⁹ I realize that comparing two or more cultures or polities as evidence for why a certain action was taken by its governing bodies, or why social habits may exist, among other potential comparisons, has not been researched at all in the field of classics, certainly, and possibly all historical fields. It is, however, an integral part of the disciplines of sociology and especially anthropology. I do not use this technique very much in this work, but it is a topic which I will return to and do more research on its application in the field of history, and classics in particular, along with its possibilities and limitations in the near future.

⁵⁰ This sort of comparative approach has regularly been used by historians, such as Alan Bullock's work Hitler and Stalin, 2nd Ed. (New York, 1998).

“classical” elements. But most importantly is the correlation between the three distinct phases of strategy followed by the Confederacy as it relates to Hannibal’s decisions:

- 1) In the first phase of the War Between the States the Confederates pursue a straightforward program for asserting control over the borderstates and territories, with the Southern armies achieving stunning victories.
- 2) In the second phase, the Confederates rely largely on a defensive posture to hold onto their gains, hoping for reinforcements from Europe that never materialize.
- 3) The final stage witnesses the Confederacy’s most determined attempt to mobilize its manpower in an attempt to sap the will of the North and bring about a settlement of peace.

Through the exploration of the generalship of Lee, I will prove Hannibal was, in fact, a ‘grand’ strategist. This should not be confused with the use of a ‘grand strategy’. Hannibal, as a ‘grand strategist’ used several strategies which have been labeled as on the level of grand strategies by military historians. He was not a man to set out on such an endeavour as attacking Rome without having an ultimate goal in mind, as well as all the necessary steps needed to accomplish the end. Since Hannibal’s conquests in Italy did not come all at once, but in stages during the first two years of the war, when did his blitzkrieg offensive change to his second strategy? Was Hannibal’s endless marching after Cannae merely a response to Roman counterattacks or did he have a master plan? If so, what was it? Was he merely fighting a war of attrition? I intend to show that this is not the case. Hannibal changed his strategy from an offensive endeavour to a defensive position in order to protect the very allies he had hoped to win to his side during the first two years of the war. Was it all part of a preconceived plan evident even before

Saguntum, or did it form in a more gradual and pragmatic way? Though Carthaginian perceptions of the world seem to lack a certain level of complexity from the modern point of view, the nature of their understanding of warfare was very focused. This focus reflects a certain set of principles and it is here that we should seek what we today call “grand strategy”.

On the level of ‘grand strategy’ – whether to undertake the war at all – it is more important to determine whether Hannibal was able to discover or predict Rome’s long-term military plans, or acquire an understanding of their social and political institutions. Churchill once remarked, “When making plans, it is as well to take into account those of the enemy.”⁵¹ This truism expresses the fundamental importance of military intelligence gathering and evaluation. Likewise as extracted from the writings of Napoleon: “In forming the plan of a campaign, it is requisite to foresee everything the enemy may do, and to be prepared with the necessary means to counteract it. Plans of campaign may be modified *ad infinitum* according to circumstances, the genius of the general, the character of the troops, and the features of the country.”⁵² What made Hannibal’s generalship outstanding was that his course was determined by the chronology of the war. The extraordinary feature about Hannibal is he does not exploit past mistakes or successes; instead, he continually breaks new ground. The picture of the general, which ultimately emerges is neither as glorious as his admirers profess, nor as demonic as his enemies have tried to propagate. The Hannibal of this account cannot be subsumed in a single grand image, but is a more changeable character constantly adjusting to the immediate situation before him, and trying to exploit it to his own advantage. His capacity for brilliant improvisation on the field of battle is legendary; his adaptations to changing

⁵¹ D.G. Chandler, The Military Maxims of Napoleon, trans. G.C. D’Aguilar (New York, 1995), page 87.

⁵² D.G. Chandler, The Military Maxims of Napoleon, page 55.

circumstances in Carthage are less well known. Hannibal, in his exercise of leadership whether in Italy or at home in Carthage, was above all a realist.

Yet was he naïve to think he could win the Roman allies to the Carthaginian cause? The ancient sources give us the impression that detailed knowledge of a region could only result from direct military knowledge gathered on campaign. If political, economic, and geographical details were largely gathered by the army, what about where the army had never been? How much political information was possible for Hannibal to obtain? Can we find here traditional elements to his understanding of the world? Again, by building on insights into Lee's military leadership, I will explore the causality of Hannibal's actions. And in doing so find the question, "What did Hannibal hope to accomplish in attacking Rome in the first place?" Then once the reason is identified, what method did he plan to use in order to accomplish it? Whatever his enemies may have said, it is clear he did not desire the destruction of Rome. Hannibal's plan worked on the psychological plane as well as the military and economic plane. This psychological element becomes especially evident in his attempts to break the Roman confederation, when, like Pyrrhus, Hannibal's initial strategy included the destruction of Roman hegemony in Italy. His goal included the substitution of a new Italian confederation under the nominal leadership of Capua, dominated by Carthage, thus rendering Rome powerless while Carthage again assumed leadership position in the Western Mediterranean. Here Theodore Ayrault Dodge gives us an interesting insight into Hannibal from the military perspective of a mid-nineteenth-century soldier, for as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Union Army he served in the New York volunteer infantry during the War Between the States. He saw action at Gettysburg, and was decorated for gallantry and meritorious service. Along with his work *Hannibal*, he wrote several others which include: *The Campaign of Chancellorsville & The Great Captains: The Art of War in the Campaigns of Alexander*,

Hannibal, Caesar Gustavus Adolphus, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon. It becomes not only important to examine the limitations on the information available to Hannibal but also to reconstruct in a positive way the traditions that formed his worldview.

The next line of inquiry builds on the insights of Lee's psychological makeup to explore the causality of Hannibal's personality to develop on the framework of tradition. It is my view that there were elements in each man that are parallel – that their boyhood, parental attitude, cultural history, and education were so different, yet so similar. As their separate yet similar histories unfold, it is apparent that Lee becomes a lens through which we can better focus on and understand Hannibal. To understand one is to explore the other. This study discusses in chapter one Hannibal's boyhood as steeped in Greek culture and tradition far more so than either Roman or other ancient historians have acknowledged. To presume Hannibal as simply a 'Carthaginian', as most past historians have, represents a fundamental error in Hannibal's personal history and is one of the reasons for the shroud of mystery that surrounds him. As we will see the Greeks brought intellectual education to the Carthaginians; and, in fact, it was the Greek scholar Sosylos of Sparta who taught Hannibal Greek and accompanied him on his march to Italy.⁵³ Consequently, it is safe to say that the Carthaginians were well aware of the accomplishments of both Alexander and Pyrrhus as shown in chapter four. We must resist the temptation of thinking that there is one vital insight, which provides a conclusive answer. It is more helpful to identify the constants in Hannibal's character and actions.

From the facts of Hannibal's boyhood, other conclusions become justifiable. Reared in Spain, the largest Carthaginian power base in the Western Mediterranean in the 3rd century B.C., at the side of a general of great renown – his father – the character of the Carthaginian boy was shaped by these experiences for the rest of his life. He could stand

⁵³ Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 13.3.

apart from his military mindset, but could not run far from it psychologically. As the son of a brilliant Carthaginian military leader, his concept of the hegemony of Carthage must have been rooted in a strong sense of family honour. A professional soldier by training and mentality, Hannibal showed himself to be a man of extraordinary willpower, supremely confident in his own abilities, utterly convinced he was doing what must be done. Next when we consider the climate of the Carthaginian merchant society, it is reasonable to expect economics to be an important concern in the minds of the Carthaginian decision makers as well as Hannibal. If Rome and her people were destroyed the revenue Carthage would gain from trade with all of Italy would surely disappear. Although seemingly obvious, the answer has apparently escaped historians' notice. Or, more likely, the modern ideas of capitalism and economics allow us to see the war in a way, which was not possible in previous ages, even to the Romans themselves.

My effort here is not to find the right answers but to ask the right questions. Framed properly, and in the spirit of fair-mindedness, the questions can illuminate, reveal, and deepen our knowledge of Hannibal. Once found, the questions are relatively easy to answer. This work is not intended to be a biography of Hannibal nor an attempt to trace his military and political career in narrative terms. While the study retains a basic chronological thread, its arrangement is deliberately more topical than narrative. The division of a subject into manageable chapters is never an easy task, and in the present work it is especially problematic. I will organize the chapters around distinct strategic concepts, which I will trace through the various phases of the conflict.

Since Hannibal was 26 years old when he became general in 218 B.C., we must assume that his fundamental character had already formed and that his military career had advanced spectacularly enough to make his march across the Alps conceivable in the first place. Moreover since the siege of Saguntum marked the beginning of a military power

manifested in his personal charisma, it seems appropriate to seek its origins in the formation of Hannibal's own personality. Two questions are chiefly at issue here: How far had Hannibal's essential character been molded by the various influences of his father and his education? And how far had opportunities in Spain assisted his own military career? Taken together, the answers to these questions will help to clarify the beginnings of his early ambition. To fully understand how Hannibal came to his choices we must first look at the relations between Carthage and Rome, Carthage's situation before the war, and Hannibal's family position in Carthaginian society. I begin with a discussion of the Carthaginian polity and other factors that influenced Hannibal's childhood and ultimately his decisions in later life, using the Lee family history to further examine how issues and background play an essential part in determining the character of a general. This chapter ultimately demonstrates that without the general – Hannibal – there would have been no second war with Rome.

Since understanding the beliefs and values common to Carthaginian culture, particularly ones that shaped Carthaginian attitudes toward Rome, is one of the most essential tasks for explaining the causes and factors for the 2nd Roman War, it is the first substantive topic taken up here and forms the second chapter of this work. The causes for the 2nd Roman War are discussed from a Carthaginian viewpoint, including the loss of Sardinia versus the Ebro treaty as the culminating event. While responsibility for the war is arguable, I will assert by claiming a friendship with Saguntum, Rome had no legal basis for their ultimatum to Carthage. For new insight, the Confederate attack on Ft. Sumter will demonstrate how blame for a war can be manoeuvred to the victim of a wrong. Hannibal's strategy, including his plan for the dissolution of the Roman Alliance System by a blitzkrieg will be discussed, with particular emphasis on his perception of the Roman Alliance System, followed by a close examination of the political and logistical

reasons for the invasion of Italy by land. Most problematic is the question of Hannibal's grasp of grand strategy. His intentions in going to war – and in taking that war to Italy – is the heart of the chapter.

The next chapter presents an overview of events as they unfold from Spain through the battle of Cannae. In depth knowledge of the battles at Trebia, Lake Trasimene, and Cannae provide the immediate settings upon which any valid analysis and interpretation of Hannibal's strategy must depend. Although much of the chapter is laid out in a chronological sequence, the narrative context is necessary to see the events as Hannibal experiences them and as a result alters his strategy accordingly. Discussing 'Lee's Masterpiece' at Chancellorsville, proposes a framework for analyzing Hannibal's tactical genius at Cannae. To this end I will show how in spite of superior numbers, the Union advantage was greatly diminished by the intrinsic superiority of an offensive rather than defensive strategy. The logistics of supplying the Confederate army over long distances, and the cohesiveness of the borderstates were almost outweighed by the charisma and character of one man: Robert E. Lee – a strikingly familiar scenario when compared to the odds Hannibal faced at Cannae. As a result of this parity, strategy and command become a critical element in determining the course and outcome of the battle. These investigations provide the intimate knowledge of the divergence between the various elements of the Carthaginian army and Hannibal's remarkable use of each group's forte in battle. This is the story behind the campaigns and battles used to explain the tactical philosophy that would later form the cornerstone of his methods as a high commander, expose both his inner motivations of strength and his weaknesses, and the character which brought him triumph.

The manifold problems in writing about Hannibal's mastery of military strength begin with his failure to attack Rome after the battle of Cannae. Chapter four embarks on

the subsequent arguments held by scholars regarding the wisdom for Livy's speech as uttered by Maharbal in his famous criticism of Hannibal. I will emphasize Hannibal's enormous strategic ability as I present the reasons why he chose not to attempt the impossible and to look at the rationale for changing from an offensive to defensive posture once it looked as though the Roman Confederation showed signs of stress. My intension is to clarify the turning point for Hannibal's change in strategy by examining the realization that he must defend his newly acquired allies. Sherman's famous 'March to the Sea' will be used to scrutinize the use of terror in war and the subsequent 'perceptions' that a given act may have on the participants. Also included in the chapter is an assessment regarding Hannibal's plans for a second front opening with the invasion of Sardinia, the increased activities in Spain, and a look at his negotiations with Philip V of Macedon. With Hannibal's brothers left in Spain against the Scipios, the promise of uprisings in Macedonia and Sardinia, and the possibility of Philip supplementing Hannibal's forces in Italy, I assert Hannibal must have been confident of a peace agreement on the horizon. And in conclusion of this chapter I will examine the Confederacy's defensive policy of protecting the Southern states' rights for self-determination to assess the non-aggressive policies of the Carthaginian senate in light of their defense of Spain rather than supplement Hannibal's campaign.

The first section of chapter five puts forward a new interpretation of the evolution of the discovery of Hasdrubal's plans to meet Hannibal in context of Lee's lost Special Order 191; and, presents an overview of the debacle culminating with the Hasdrubal's death at the battle of Metaurus. Next is an examination of the Roman invasion of Africa, and the subsequent change by Hannibal to a third strategy of damage control upon his recall to Africa and defeat at Zama. The final section of the chapter presents the last years of his life and the decisions he implemented for the continued existence of his country. It

shows that Hannibal came to serve Carthage after Zama in a new political role as a pre-eminent member of Carthage's ruling body. The study ends with a brief epilogue that draws upon the political advantage for post-war Rome to eliminate Hannibal and downplay the memory of this great soldier. I propose that the nature of Carthaginian society during the Hannibalic period must be reconsidered, and suggest some features of such a revised understanding. I have included five maps to reference sites mentioned and/or details concerning Hannibal's journeys, with each map placed in the proper section to provide the most assistance.

This study focuses on a careful analysis of Hannibal's command and strategy and will prove that Hannibal, in making his wise strategic choices, astutely balanced political and military considerations. Previous studies, and almost all previous explanations of Hannibal's actions have transferred conclusions from the Roman societal levels of analysis to Hannibal, the individual. Few interpreters have concerned themselves with the military aspect of a general's conduct, which is where this study diverges. Further by adopting the War Between the States as the standard for an appraisal to present a new look at the complexities of the war, I hypothesize that, contrary to common expectation, when Hannibal's actions and strategies are interchanged with those of General Robert E. Lee, a new clarity emerges. The political context, war aims, and the effects on public and official opinion give most campaigns, as well as battles, the bulk of their significance, yet a different outcome rarely would change the course of the war.

Chapter I

To understand fully many of the points made in the succeeding chapters, it is necessary to illustrate the background against which Hannibal's ultimate decisions were made. Carthage was a vast polity controlling an empire larger than any other in the Mediterranean area excluding the Seleucid Empire. How this empire was governed and the conditions under which Hannibal experienced his childhood are the subjects of this chapter. Only those details necessary to understand the attitudes and patterns of Hannibal's thinking are dealt with in detail. This chapter will take us to the moment when Hannibal is acclaimed commander of the armies in Spain after the death of Hasdrubal in 219 B.C.

Who is in Command?

By the third century B.C., ancient writers sought to interpret Carthage's institutions as an example of a mixed form of constitution, which philosophers and historians at the time, including Aristotle, had posited as the most stable system. Elements of three forms of rule: monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy, were, it was claimed, all found in Carthage after the 1st Roman War and the balance between them resulted in an uneasy determination of who controlled the political power of the state. Upon closer examination of the Carthaginian constitution, it will be easy to understand how and why the Barca family and the Carthaginian senate came to odds.

Greek observers defined the elements of the Carthaginian constitution as follows: the monarchy, represented in the power of the king; the oligarchy, represented by the senate and/or One Hundred and Four; and the democracy, represented by the People's

Assembly.⁵⁴ Aristotle records many of the details of the constitution of Carthage in *Politics* and praises the system as “in many respects...superior to all others.”⁵⁵ He quotes and agrees with the general opinion that “Carthage also appears to have a good constitution, with many outstanding features as compared with those of other nations...”⁵⁶ Aristotle was not alone in his admiration of the Carthaginian constitution. Cicero writes, “Nor could Carthage have prospered so greatly for about six hundred years without good counsel and strict training.”⁵⁷ Aristotle gives excellent reasons for this superiority, stating, “...and a proof that its constitution is well regulated is that the populace willingly remain faithful to the constitutional system, and that neither civil strife has arisen in any degree worth mentioning, nor yet a tyrant.”⁵⁸

⁵⁴ For other descriptions of the Carthaginian constitution and government see N. Bagnall, *The Punic Wars*, pages 12-14; especially S. Lancel, *Carthage: A History*, trans. A. Nevill (Oxford, 1995), pages 110-120 & B.H. Warmington, *Carthage*, Revised Edition (London, 1969), pages 138-144. For a comparison between the constitutions of Carthage and Rome, see D.E. Hahm, “Kings and Constitutions: Hellenistic Theories”, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2000), pages 457-476.

⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, Vol. XXI, trans. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass, 1932), 2.8.1.

⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.8.1.

“Πολιτευσθαι δε δοκουσι και Καρχηδονιοι καλως και πολλα περιττως προς τους αλλους...”

⁵⁷ Cicero, *De Re Publica*, Book I, Frag. 3. “Nec tantum Karthago habuisset opum sescentos fere annos sine consiliis et disciplina.”

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.8.1.

“σημειον δε πολιτειας συντεταγμενης το τον δημον εκουσιον διαμενειν εν τη ταξει της πολιτειας, και μητε στασιν ο τι και αχιον ειπειν γεγενησθαι μητε τυραννον.”; A.J. Toynbee also mentions the effectiveness of the Carthaginian constitution in *Hannibal’s Legacy: The Hannibalic War’s Effects on Roman Life*, Vol. I (London, 1965) , page 38 as does R.C.C. Law, “North Africa in the Period of Phoenician and Greek Colonization, c. 800 to 323 B.C.”, *The Cambridge History of Africa: c. 500 B.C. – A.D. 1050*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1978), page 122.

Aristotle, writing in the fourth century B.C., speaks of Carthage having “kings,”⁵⁹ and this name as given to the chief magistrate of the city often occurs in history.⁶⁰ From the sixth to the fifth century B.C., Mago and his descendents established themselves as rulers of Carthage through the monopolization of military appointments. About a century after Himera in 396, the Magonid kings were removed from power and Carthage became a constitutional republic. In the same year the aristocracy formed a tribunal of One Hundred and Four to rule political life and supervise the generals, subjecting the public to the harsh laws of the austere and disciplined rich.⁶¹ Hanno, who died at Himera, and Hamilco, son of Gisgo were described in Greek writings by the word *Βασιλευς* or king. Even Hanno, who commanded the exploration and colonization expedition described by Pliny the Elder is entitled “king.”⁶² However, they were not like the kings of the East; they were expressly compared to the kings of Sparta.

As at Sparta, Carthaginian kings presided over the senate and controlled civil administration as well as functioning in a judicial role, though, unlike Sparta they were elected, “...Carthaginian kings are not confined to the same family...the Elders [kings] are to be chosen from these rather than by age...”⁶³ Although these “kings” were elected

⁵⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.8.2. “βασιλεις”.

⁶⁰ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, Vol. VIII, trans. F.G. Moore, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), 28.37.2. “sufetes...qui summus Poenis est magistratus” Trans. “...sufetes - the highest magistrates among the Poeni (Carthaginians)...”

⁶¹ G.C. & C. Picard, *The Life and Death of Carthage: A Survey of Punic History and Culture from its Birth to Final Tragedy* (London, 1968), page 123.

⁶² Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.8.8.

⁶³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.8.2.

“... και Βελτιον δε τους βασιλεις μητε κατα το αυτο ειναι γενος,... εκ τουτων αιρετους μαλλον η

for a one-year term and had roughly comparable powers to the consuls of Rome during the Republic, the Carthaginian kings were required to report to and obtain the blessing of the Council of Elders and Assembly of the People. As kings they did have broad powers in war, religion and government; whereas the Roman Consuls were elected for a one-year term with not only complete control of administration, including the appointment of military tribunes, they also commanded legions when the army took to the field. An example of this system can be seen when Hannibal is elected as *suffete* for the year 196 B.C. The Carthaginian word *suffete* was equivalent to the Hebrew word *shophet*, translated in the Old Testament as “judges.”⁶⁴ Their role in Carthage, as in pre-monarchical Israel, was probably broader than purely judicial, but differed from Rome in having no military function. Walbank proclaims that usually, “...one seems to have presided over sittings of the council.”⁶⁵

Next in power to the *suffetes* were the generals, also elected by the people of Carthage. Members of the senate were most likely the only people eligible to “run” for office. A *suffete* did not command an army or a fleet unless he was specifically appointed to the post. The Carthaginians – similar to the Athenian model – elected generals to special theatres of conflict and/or to a specific goal without territorial restrictions. With the problems associated with communication in ancient times the Carthaginian method of command allowed these generals to make major decisions in the field. Though at times

καθ' ἑλκικιαν.” Unfortunately the sentence immediately preceding this one has been lost. It is presumed that the “these” refers to the Council of One Hundred and Four.

⁶⁴ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War: A Military History (London, 1996), page 20.

⁶⁵ F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 361. It is possible that a *suffete* presided over either the Council or the Committee, or perhaps both. This could explain why there were two *suffetes*. One to preside over each “house.”

this freedom of command resulted in a negative outcome for the leader if the results proved unsuccessful or unsatisfactory. At times a general would be made *suffete* while he was absent on service. After returning from a campaign, a general had to account for his actions to the Council of One Hundred and Four at a court hearing. If for some reason the Council found him incompetent, he was crucified. Although subject to crucifixion the commanders of these mercenary armies proved devoted to Carthage, often serving the state for many years. The popularity among the people of Hamilcar Barca and his son Hannibal kept both from experiencing the fate of crucifixion.

Below these officers of state came a legislative body, we may call the senate.⁶⁶ In this senate were two bodies: the smaller body consisted of the most powerful thirty members out of the larger body, as a sort of executive committee.⁶⁷ The senate was called into existence to meet the danger of a monarchy, which sooner or later overtook most of the republics of the ancient world. Affluent families filled the 300-member senate, exercising control over all public affairs, legislating, and deciding on peace and war. Because the senators held office for life, the consistency of the body and its performance created a close-knit establishment bound by class interests and social prominence. There were no regular changes of government and no passing of power.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Polybius, The Histories, Vol. I, trans. W.R. Paton, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1922), 1.21.6. Polybius also uses the word συνέδριον at 3.8.4, instead of γερουσία. He does not seem to distinguish between the two and both words are usually translated as meaning “senate”. See also F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 76.

⁶⁷ It should be mentioned that to the Carthaginians “power” was derived from personal authority due to previous offices held, a strong character, and most importantly, wealth. T.A. Dodge, Hannibal (Boston, 1891) page 4.

⁶⁸ Aristotle, Politics, 2.8.1.

Several times Livy mentions “factions” at Carthage in connection with the Carthaginian senate or its members. Obvious examples of these divisions are shown when he alleges the Carthaginians were at odds on the question of going to war (the 2nd Roman War) in the first place,⁶⁹ and later quotes that Hanno advocated Hannibal’s surrender as the Roman embassy demanded.⁷⁰ Later Carthaginian envoys sent to Rome claimed that the senate and the people of Carthage had never broken their treaty with Rome and that Hannibal had been acting of his own accord.⁷¹

The senate also nominated a panel of inquiry – the court of one hundred and four judges “Magistry [Council] of One Hundred and Four.”⁷² They were probably broken up into small groups with jurisdiction over certain types of crime and one of the *suffetes* presiding over the Council. No mention is made of the relationship between the Council and the *suffetes*. This is very unusual since the *suffetes* were judges as well. It is reasonable to assume that the *suffetes* were the final court of appeal for court cases. Until Hamilcar Barca, the Council also remained an important check on the power of the military.

The “Boards of Five”⁷³ or Pentarchies were most likely committees having charge of various important parts of government, such as finance, trade, and military matters. We do know that the Pentarchies elected the members of the Council; therefore, it seems logical that the Pentarchies were assigned to similar areas as the small groups of the

⁶⁹ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.9.4.

⁷⁰ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.10.4.

⁷¹ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 30.22.1 & 30.42.11.

⁷² Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.8.2. “τῶν ἑκατὸν καὶ τετταρῶν”

⁷³ Aristotle, *Politics*, 2.8.4. “τὰς πενταρχίας κυρίας”

Council, although we are not clear as to whether they were divisions of the Council or of the senate.⁷⁴

Although little is known about the general assembly of the people, Aristotle states, “...when the kings introduce business in the assembly, they do not merely let the people sit and listen to the decisions that have been taken by their rulers, but the people have the sovereign decision and anybody who wishes may speak against the proposals introduced...”⁷⁵ Aristotle goes on to say that the people also had the right of approving or disapproving appointments to offices.⁷⁶ The Assembly’s power was limited to approving or rejecting measures brought before it – all such measures first being considered in the senate.

“The reference of some matters and not of others to the popular assembly rests with the kings in consultation with the Elders in case they agree unanimously, but failing that, these matters also lie with the people; and when the kings introduce business in the assembly, they do not merely let the people sit and listen to the decisions that have been taken by their rulers, but the people have the sovereign decision and anybody who wishes may speak against the proposals introduced, a right that does not exist under the other [Crete and Sparta] constitutions.”⁷⁷

⁷⁴ It is worth mentioning that our only source for the Boards of Five is in Aristotle, Politics, 2.8.4.

⁷⁵ Aristotle, Politics, 2.8.3.

“δ’ αν εισφερωσιν ουτοι, ου διακουσαι μονον αποδιδοασι τω δημω τα δοξαντα τοις αρχουσιν, αλλα κυριοι κρινειν εισι, και τω βουλομενω τοις εισφερομενοις αντειπειν εξεστιν...” Aristotle claims the people could speak out against the proposals; it is presumed they could speak in its defense as well. Almost certainly, as in nearly all other ancient constitutions which had an assembly of the people, the people could not actually amend the proposal.

⁷⁶ Aristotle, Politics, 2.8.5.

⁷⁷ Aristotle, Politics, 2.8.3.

The people were also lobbied to bolster support for risky adventures such as Hamilcar's plans for Spain, and Hannibal's attack on Saguntum. The identity of the people allowed to attend these assemblies is not known. Since the Carthaginians did not have a property qualification for entering politics, it seems likely that wealth was a factor,⁷⁸ and all those who were in the service of the Carthaginian "state" or had any land within the city of Carthage's surrounding area, or had any material wealth, were eligible to attend and speak in these assemblies. While conditional on property ownership, membership of the popular assembly represented modest wealth compared with the riches of the senate.

These were the actual estates of the realm of Carthage: the *suffetes*, the senate with the Committee and the Council of One Hundred and Four, the Assembly of the People, and the Pentarchies. It seems likely that in a state where wealth was so important, families could be considered nobility or the upper class, as they would have stayed in various offices and in the senate as long as the family continued to have considerable wealth. There was no bar of birth, which prevented one from becoming a member of this nobility; ability and wealth would pass anyone into it.⁷⁹ Aristotle noted that the Carthaginian oligarchy allowed the common people a liberal share of trade profits; coupled with the fact that the people were spared the social upheavals of military service, they were much happier with the status quo.

“του μεν γαρ το μεν προσαγειν το δε μη προσαγειν προς τον γημον οι βασιλεις κυριοι μετα των γεροντων αν ομογνωμονωσι παντες, ει δε μη, και τουτων ο δημοσ· α δ’ αν εισφερωσιν ουτοι, ου διακουσαι μονον αποδιδοασι τω δημω τα δοξαντα τοις αρχουσιν, αλλα κυριοι κρινειν εισι, και τω βουλομενω τοις εισφερομενοις αντειπειν εξεστιν, οπερ εν ταις ετεραις πολιτειαις ουκ εστιν.”

⁷⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*. 2.8.5-7.

⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*. 4.5.11.

Aristotle further indicates the offices of state were unpaid. This does not imply that they were not lucrative. Instead offices of state brought patronage and opportunities for making money. He states that the highest offices – and he names those of King and General – were put up for sale. Aristotle sees this as a great flaw in the constitution, “...it is a bad thing that the greatest offices of state, the kingship and generalship should be for sale. For this law makes wealth more honoured than worth, and renders the whole state avaricious...”⁸⁰ As with any state based on wealth, Carthage inevitably decayed causing domination to fall to a few wealthy citizens.⁸¹ It took a rare combination of the economic distress following the 1st Roman War and the Mercenary Revolt, along with this corruption to alter the balance of power represented in the constitution.

A democratic revolution occurred in Carthage at the outcome of the 1st Roman War, and the exact date of 237 B.C. has been put forward.⁸² Inspired by a few lines by Polybius from the viewpoint of Scipio Aemilianus of the development of political life in Carthage after Aristotle’s study:

“The constitution of Carthage seems to me to have been originally well contrived as regards its most distinctive points. For there were kings, and the house of Elders was an aristocratical force, and the people were supreme in matters proper to them, the entire frame of the state much resembling that of Rome and Sparta.

But at the time when they entered on the Hannibalic War, the Carthaginian

⁸⁰ Aristotle, Politics, 2.8.6.

“... φαῦλον το τας μεγιστας ωνητασειναι των αρχων, την τε βασιλειαν και την στρατηγιαν. εντιμον γαρ ο νομος ουτος ποιει τον πλουτον μαλλον της αρετης και την πολιν ολην φιλοχρηματον.”

⁸¹ Aristotle, Politics, 2.8.5-7.

⁸² G.C. and C. Picard, Carthage: A Survey of Punic History and Culture from its Birth to the Final Tragedy, trans. D. Collon (London, 1968), pages 208-210.

constitution had degenerated, and that of Rome was better. For as every body or state or action has its natural periods first of growth, then of prime, and finally of decay, and as everything in them is at its best when they are in their prime, it was for this reason that the difference between the two states manifested itself at this time. For by as much as the power and prosperity of Carthage had been earlier than that of Rome, by so much had Carthage already begun to decline; while Rome was exactly at her prime, as far at least as her system of government was concerned. Consequently the multitude at Carthage had already acquired the chief voice in deliberations; while at Rome the senate still retained this; and hence, as in one case the masses deliberated and in the other the most eminent men, the Roman decisions on public affairs were superior, so that although they met with complete disaster, they were finally by the wisdom of their counsels victorious over the Carthaginians in the war.”⁸³

⁸³ Polybius, The Histories, Vol. III, trans. W.R. Paton, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1923),

6.51 “Το δε Καρχηδονίων πολιτευμα το μεν ανεκαθεν μοι δοκει καλως κατα γε τας ολοσχερεις διαφορας συνεστασθαι. και γαρ βασιλεις ησαν παρ’ αυτοις, και το γεροντιον ειχε την αριστοκρατικην εξουσιαν, και το πληθος ην κυριον των καθηκοντων αυτω· καθολου δε την των ολων αρμογην ειχε παραπλησιαν τη ’Ρωμαιοιων και Λακεδαιμονιων. κατα γε μην τους καιρους τουτους, καθ’ ους εις τον ’Αννιβιακον ενεβαινε πολεμον, χειρον ην το Καρχηδονίων, αμεινον δε το ’Ρωμαιοιων. επειδη γαρ παντος και σωματος και πολιτειας και πραξεως εστι τις αυξησις κατα φυσιν, μετα δε ταυτην ακμη, καπειτα φθισις, κρατιστα δ’ αυτων εστι παντα τα κατα την ακμην, παρα τουτο και τοτε διεφερεν αλληλων τα πολιτευματα. καθ’ οσον γαρ η Καρχηδονίων προτερον ισχυε και προτερον ευτυχει της ’Ρωμαιοιων, κατα τοσουτον η μεν Καρχηδων ηδη τοτε παρηκμαζεν, η δε ’Ρωμη μαλιστα τοτ’ ειχε την ακμην κατα γε την της πολιτειας συστασιν. διο και την πλειστην δυναμιν εν τοις διαβουλοις παρα μεν Καρχηδονιοις ο δημος ηδη μετειληφει, παρα δε ’Ρωμαιοις ακμην ειχεν η συγκλητος. οθεν παρ’ οις μεν των πολλων βουλευομενων, παρ’ οις δε των αριστων, κατισχυε τα ’Ρωμαιοιων διαβουλια περι τας κοινας πραξεις. η και πταισαντες τοις

Convened by the *suffetes*, from the end of the fourth century, the Assembly of the People numbered among its responsibilities the election of generals. At least from the time of the 1st Roman War, Polybius stresses the preponderance of the Assembly of the People's power and he considered it the result of a warping or debasement of the balance of power extolled by Aristotle slightly over a century earlier. Polybius further states at the time of the 2nd Roman War Carthage was much more democratic than Rome and unhesitatingly sees this political situation as one of the causes of Carthaginian defeat.⁸⁴ The efforts by Hamilcar to bring an end to the social crisis created by the Mercenary War enabled him to put an end to the omnipotence of the oligarchy. It was however the People's Assembly, directed by the Barcas, who fought to safeguard the independence of Carthage, whereas the oligarchs on several occasions set an example of compromise or of an equally unworthy consideration.

We know that in 221 B.C. the Assembly of the People ratified the choice of Hannibal to command the Army of Spain. Opposition between the oligarchy who opposed the Barcid policies and the Assembly of the People were recurrent throughout both Hamilcar's and Hannibal's commands. Although the Barca generals were given more independence to develop their own ideas, conflicting priorities between Hannibal and the senate during the 2nd Roman War may have been a crippling factor in the Carthaginian war effort.

ολοις τω βουλευεσθαι καλως τελος επεκρατησαν τω πολεμω των Καρχηδονιων.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 735-736.

⁸⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 1.82.12 & Diodorus Siculus, The Library of History, 25.8. F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 146 mentions that this may not be Hannibal Barca, but another Hannibal.

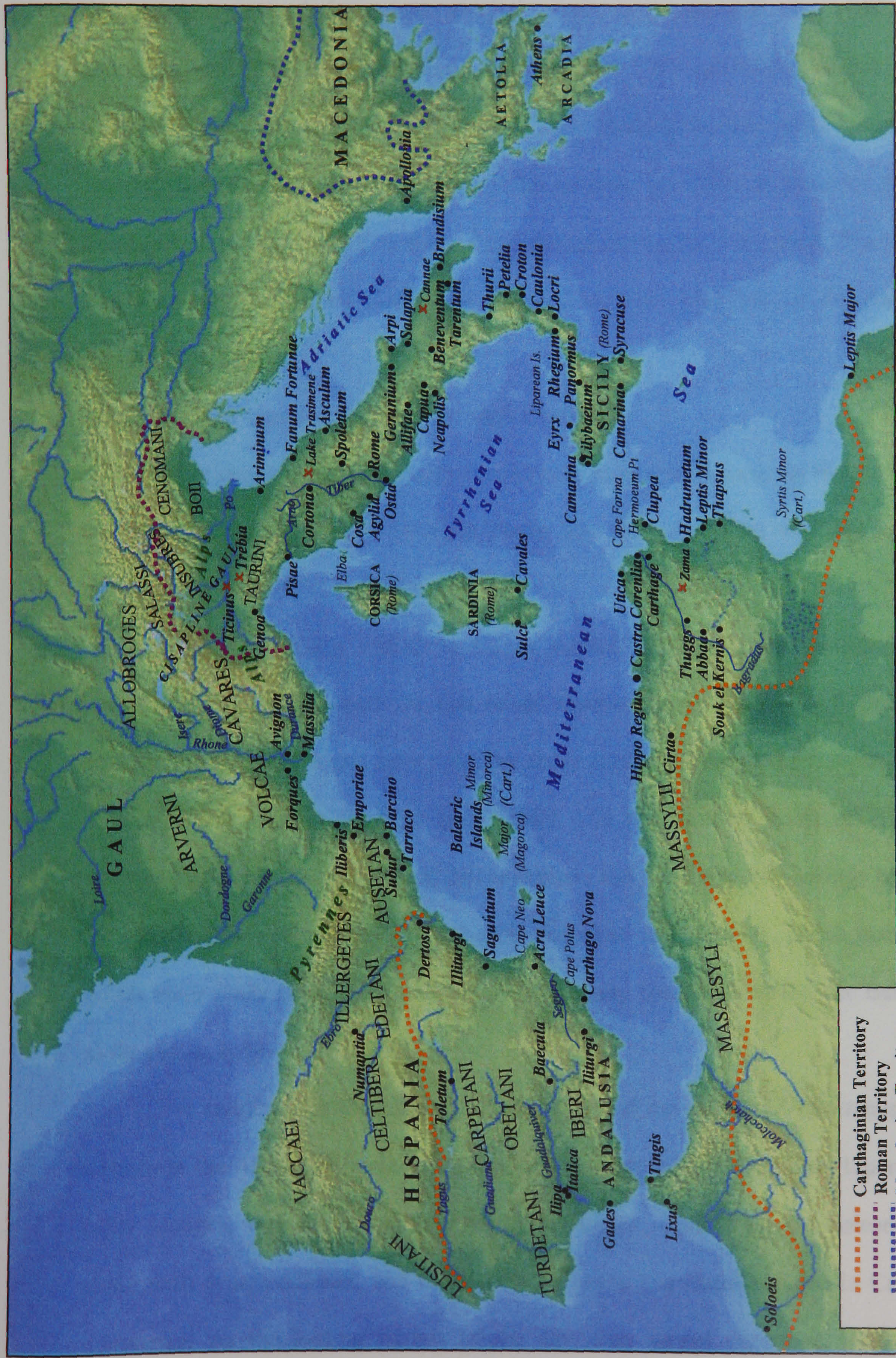
There are historical indications of growing power within the Assembly of the People, even stronger some years later at the beginning of the second century, after the unhappy outcome for Carthage of the 2nd Roman War. Livy tells how Hannibal, on taking charge as *suffete* in 196 B.C., used the occasion of a disagreement he had with a magistrate whom Livy describes as *quaestor* to settle scores with the powerful *ordo iudicum* [order of judges]. This *quaestor* [apparently a magistrate entrusted with financial duties] who belonged to the faction opposed to Hannibal and was almost certain of impunity since on leaving office he was bound to enter the order of judges, a form of irremovable magistrates. For that reason he ignored the *suffete*'s summons. Even so Hannibal had him brought by an attendant before the Assembly of the People and took advantage of that Assembly's support to put through a law determining that in future the judges would be elected each year, and that no one could be a judge for two consecutive years.⁸⁵ Hannibal, like Caesar, appealed to the common man, which allowed him to bypass the senate by petitioning directly to the Assembly of the People.

As I shall discuss in detail in the final chapter of this study, generals often made strategic decisions without the knowledge or approval of the Carthaginian home government. Livy's account of a conference between Hasdrubal and his fellow-generals, at which time they decide the future disposition and command of the Carthaginian armies is a precise example of the policy decisions and control allowed generals in the field.⁸⁶ On the other hand we might consider at this point actions the senate instigated, such as the recall to Africa of Mago and Hannibal in 203.⁸⁷ Although our sources are limited, which makes it difficult to generalize about the division of control between the generals in the

⁸⁵ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, Vol. IX, trans. E. Sage, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), 33.46.

⁸⁶ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 27.20.3-8.

⁸⁷ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.18.



Carthaginian and Roman Territories

field and the Carthaginian senate, the evidence suggests that depending on the circumstances the duties were divided. But, who decided the vital issue of reinforcements? Who ultimately made these decisions? Though a Carthaginian general in the field had a great deal of leeway in his command decisions, the senate held the key to conscripts or citizen soldiers from Carthage or from her allies in Spain or Africa. No troops could be conscripted without the Carthaginian senate's approval. The mercenary forces recruited from the Gauls and Italian city-states were left to the commanding general's option.

What Brought Carthage and Rome Into Conflict?

After centuries of seemingly peaceful coexistence what were the factors that led to the break in the relationship between Rome and Carthage? First we need to examine development in the Mediterranean region.

When Mycenaean society broke up around 1100 B.C., the commercial routes linking mainland Greece with the rest of the Mediterranean were severed. From 750 to 550 B.C. the Greeks began colonizing the shore regions of the Mediterranean and Black seas, including sites in southern Italy, Sicily, and the southern coast of France. The colonies had access to unrestricted native markets and were able to exchange basic goods for mainland-finished products of olive oil and wine. By 300 B.C. Greek manufactured goods were freely circulating to North Africa, Spain, the Rhône valley, the Balkans, and as far east as India.

For centuries Carthaginian merchantmen sailed the eastern Mediterranean, trading corn from the Africa and metals from Spain. Carthage dealt in resin from Lipara, sulphur from Acrages, wax, honey, and slaves from Corsica, cattle from the Balearic Islands, along with dyes, perfumes, and dates from the many city-states induced to Carthaginian commerce. As the leading traders of the day, they served clients as diverse as their

commodities. Thus, the scope and complexity of the Carthaginian merchant class mounted as rich merchants bought farms with their profits while Greek artisans lived and worked in their city.⁸⁸ The Carthaginians had colonies in North Africa, Spain, and western Sicily with interests extending as far north as Britain and the Baltic to the Canary Islands, the Cameroons, as well as the Azores. In the Mediterranean, Sicily, the Maltese islands, and the Lipari Islands were Carthaginian key maritime ports. Carthage had grown into one of the most thriving cities in the Mediterranean, controlling western trade while the Greek states controlled the east. During this period Carthage maintained lucrative trade agreements with Sardinia, Corsica, and the Balearic⁸⁹ while Rome steadily consolidated its gains on the mainland.

In Rome's early years the Greek states and Carthage were the two great powers and neither had paid a great deal of attention to the Romans. However Carthage, considering the establishment of the Roman republic a good northern buffer to Greek aspirations in the west just as the Etruscans before them, signed a treaty with Rome as early as the sixth century B.C. to regulate their respective spheres of interest. Carthage enjoyed good relations with the Etruscans in their day, and had no reason to feel they could not find similar good relations with Rome. The treaty limited Rome's ability to trade in Africa and Sardinia to only under the supervision of Carthaginian authorities; Rome further agreed not to sail west of Carthage. Carthage pledged to forego any colonial pursuit within the Latin towns of Italy.⁹⁰

Carthage imposed further trade restrictions in a later treaty, signed in the fourth century B.C., which excluded Roman merchants from all of North Africa as well as

⁸⁸ A. Lloyd, Destroy Carthage!: The Death Throes of an Ancient Culture (London, 1977), pages 96-97.

⁸⁹ E. Bradford, Hannibal, page 4.

⁹⁰ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, pages 31-32.

Sardinia and Southern Spain.⁹¹ As Rome continued to incorporate most of Campania into the Italian confederacy, it plunged into bitter conflict with the Samnites; and, while Rome remained preoccupied securing these territories, Carthage continued to advance its mercantile dominance. By 306 B.C. Carthage and Rome had signed a third agreement further consolidating Carthage's continuing trade monopolies to include Sicily. The annexation of Sicily, an obligatory staging area for coastal shipping, made the route extremely important to control of trade in Mediterranean. Further, Carthage was especially interested in reminding the Romans of their previous treaties in light of their recent victories over the Samnites.⁹²

The invasion of Italy by Pyrrhus in the third century B.C. drew Rome and Carthage closer together in a common cause. Both had reasons for this, but most importantly, the Romans wanted help. But what did Carthage have to gain by such an alliance? The treaty made in 279/8, specifically, denotes, "...the Carthaginians are to provide the ships for transport and hostilities, but each country shall provide the pay for its own men."⁹³ The treaty goes on to say that, "The Carthaginians, if necessary, shall come to help the Romans by sea too, but no one shall compel the crew to land against their will."⁹⁴ The Carthaginians willingly made such a treaty only if they felt threatened.

⁹¹ H.H. Scullard, "Carthage and Rome", Cambridge Ancient History, 2nd Ed., Vol. VII, Part 2 (Cambridge, 1989), pages 527-528. See F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 346 for a detailed listing of the treaty terms.

⁹² Livy mentions that an embassy was sent bearing the gift of a twenty-five pound gold crown. Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, Vol. III, trans. B.O. Foster, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1924), 7.38.2.

⁹³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.25.4.

“τα πλοια παρεχετωσαν Καρχηδονιοι και εις την οδον και εις την εφοδον, τα δε οψωνια τοις αυτων εκατεροι.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 351.

⁹⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.25.5.

The most logical place the Carthaginians felt a threat was in Sicily. Unfortunately, there is a major discrepancy in the treaty. Although dismissed by Polybius, the treaty includes a clause forbidding Carthage from setting foot in Italy and the Romans from Sicily.⁹⁵ Polybius dismisses this clause on the grounds that Philinus, one of his primary sources for his history, was pro-Carthaginian and could not be trusted. Polybius apparently had no recourse other than to use Philinus, although he did so cautiously as he does with Fabius Pictor.⁹⁶

In 278 B.C., upon receiving a request from Syracuse to fight against the Carthaginians in Sicily, Pyrrhus proceeded to reduce Carthaginian control over the area to the city of Lilybaeum.⁹⁷ Faced with the indifference of the Greek Siciliots toward his larger plans against Carthage, and having battled to a stalemate at Beneventum, in 275 Pyrrhus abandoned Sicily and Italy.⁹⁸ After he returned to Epirus, he is reputed to have said as a parting comment, “My friends, what a wrestling ground for Carthaginians and Romans we are leaving behind us!”⁹⁹ Pyrrhus’ invasion had steeped Italy in grief for the

“Καρχηδονιοι δε και κατα θαλατταν Ῥωμαιοις βοηθειωσαν, αν χρεια η. τα δε πληρωματα μηδεις αναγκαζετω εκβαινειν ακουσιως.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 349, where he says that Polybius “makes it (the treaty) a renewal of the older treaties with the addition of certain new clauses specifically concerned with Pyrrhus.”

⁹⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.26.5-7 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 355.

⁹⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 1.15.12 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 67.

⁹⁷ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, page 34.

⁹⁸ Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean (London, 1969), page 78.

⁹⁹ Plutarch, Parallel Lives: Pyrrhus, Vol. IX, trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1920), 23.6. “Οταν απολειπομεν, ω φιλοι, Καρχηδονιοις και Ῥωμαιοις παλαιστραν.”

men killed in battle and Roman bitterness was not diminished by the knowledge that Carthage, for all her financial investment, risked the lives of relatively few of her own men. And from the Carthaginian point of view, Rome did not render any assistance against Pyrrhus in Sicily.

Rome emerged from the war with new status and confidence. The whole of Italy from the Arno and the Rubicon to the Gulf of Tarentum and the Straits of Messina now came under Roman control. From this point on Rome became a major power.¹⁰⁰ For a state without a sea force the logical extension of the Roman republic was the stepping-stone of Sicily – only five kilometers from the mainland of Italy¹⁰¹ – despite the fact that the appeal for Rome to venture an interest in the island was perilously at odds with Carthage's long held strategic view of Sicily. The Carthaginians were always prepared to reach an accommodation so long as they perceived no threat, but Rome was quickly becoming a military and expansionist power. In previous centuries, Rome had seen the Carthaginians back down during continued struggles with the Greeks provided their vital concerns were not endangered. Although the Carthaginians had no territorial designs in Italy, they wished to be left in peace to conduct their trading, it is not surprising that in 264 B.C. Carthage began the first of three confrontations with Rome in a struggle over Sicily and for the mastery of the Western Mediterranean.

The actual flashpoint for Carthage occurred during an exceptionally absurd episode in Sicilian politics: the occupation of Messina by a group of Italian mercenaries. Several years earlier a group of Campanian mercenaries, the Mamertines or “men of Mars,” had set themselves up in Sicily, hiring out to first one ambitious warlord and then another. During this time they found themselves at war with Hiero, the latest “king” of

¹⁰⁰ Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, page 78.

¹⁰¹ Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, page 82.

Syracuse.¹⁰² Seeking assistance against Syracuse, the Mamertines sought help from a power outside of Sicily. At that time, "...a Carthaginian fleet happened to be at the Lipari Islands, and ...its commander, Hannibal, ...approached Hiero, ...somehow to forestall action on his part,"¹⁰³ against the Mamertines. "Hiero took no further action and Hannibal was then able to persuade the Mamertines to accept a Carthaginian garrison, whereupon Hiero withdrew."¹⁰⁴ Thus far, nothing seemed out of the ordinary because Carthage always considered Sicily within its sphere of influence. However, "...shortly afterwards the Mamertines also appealed to Rome."¹⁰⁵ Why the Mamertines appealed to both Carthage and Rome is full of speculation. Possibly in their "...knowing that Carthage and Rome recently had been in alliance against Pyrrhus, they could see no harm in approaching both," and both might see Syracuse as another mutual enemy.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, this was wishful thinking and "...the potential for a clash between the two powers was now clearly there."¹⁰⁷

Polybius states that the Romans debated this for some time, and even though the Senate voted against helping the Mamertines,

"...they yet saw that the Carthaginians had not only reduced Libya to subjection, but a great part of Spain besides, and that they were also in possession of all the islands in the Sardinian and Tyrrhenian Seas. They were therefore in great

¹⁰² Polybius, The Histories, 1.8.3; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 54-55 & Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, Vol. XIV, trans. A.C. Schesinger, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), Summary of Book XVI.

¹⁰³ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, page 36.

¹⁰⁴ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, pages 36-37.

¹⁰⁵ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, page 37.

¹⁰⁶ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, page 37.

¹⁰⁷ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, page 37.

apprehension lest, if they also became masters of Sicily, they would be more troublesome and dangerous neighbours, hemming them in on all sides and threatening every part of Italy.”¹⁰⁸

This perceived threat, and the thought of plunder, won over the people of Rome and the measure passed.¹⁰⁹ Rome dispatched an army to Sicily under the command of Consul Appius Claudius Caudex in blatant violation of their treaty with Carthage.¹¹⁰ The Carthaginian commander was persuaded to withdraw in favour of the Roman guard, which set the scene for further escalation. The Roman Senate empowered Appius Claudius “...to make war on both Hiero and the Carthaginians if necessary...”¹¹¹ If they attempted peace negotiations, the negotiations failed and, “...he immediately proceeded

¹⁰⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 1.10.5-6.

“ου μην αγνοουντες γε τουτων ουδεν, θεωρουντες δε τους Καρχηδονιους ου μονον τα κατα την Λιβυην, αλλα και της Ίβηριας υπηκοα μερη πεποιημενους, ετι δε των νησων απασων εγκρατεις υπαρχοντας των κατα το Σαρδονιον και Τυρρηνικον πελαγος, ηγωνιων, ει Σικελιας ετι κυριευσαιεν, μη λιαν βαρεις και φοβεροι γειτονες αυτοις υπαρχοιεν, κυκλω σφας περιεχοντες και πασι τοις της Ίταλιας μερεσιν επικειμενοι.” Dodge expands this to say the “...real origin of the wars against Carthage lay in the jealousy of Rome for the power at sea of the Carthaginians, and her fear lest the possession of Sicily by Carthage should become a threat to her own dominion in Italy.” T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, page 122. This seems very unlikely as in the case of the first and second wars it was Carthage who made the first move and Rome reacted. It was not until Carthage had done some perceived wrong to the Romans that a war broke out. See also F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 59-60.

¹⁰⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 1.11.2 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 61.

¹¹⁰ S. Lancel, Carthage: A History, page 364.

¹¹¹ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, page 37.

to attack them both.”¹¹² To eject the Romans, Carthage joined forces with Hiero of Syracuse. The culminating point came in 264 B.C. when the Romans crossed reinforcements to Messana on a fleet of rafts, raised the siege imposed by Hiero and Carthage, and marched into Syracuse. In a prudent move, Hiero changed sides, contracting an alliance with Rome, which endured for the remainder of his life. His defection gave Roman forces control of the east coast of Sicily and further encouraged other Siciliots to make terms, leaving Carthage no option other than a mobilization in force.

What Lessons Did Carthage and Hannibal Learn from the First War?

Even though the culmination of events in the Mediterranean made the 1st Roman War unavoidable, an investigation into how Carthage changed as the war proceeded and what both Hannibal and the Carthaginians learned from the First War will answer questions relevant to the central thesis of this study.

First, each side probably underestimated the strength and resolution of the other.¹¹³ Largely fought as a naval conflict, the war involved land campaigns as well. Never before had Carthage’s reliance on a mercenary army been tested against an enemy with so vast a reserve of fighting men and such effectiveness in mobilization. Compelled to adopt a defensive role in their Sicilian strongholds of Acragas, Lilybaeum, Drepana, and Panormus until their mercenaries were organized many in Carthage pressed the need to develop continental power in North Africa while Hamilcar Barca consistently stressed Mediterranean precedence. Even as the Romans besieged Drepana and Lilybaeum, the Carthaginian party led by Hanno, actively pressed for the extension of territory as far as

¹¹² J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, page 37.

¹¹³ Polybius, The Histories, 1.15 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 66-67.

The veste on the mainland of Africa. It may have been a prudent policy, but it diverted the much-needed resources from Sicily and promoted friction between Hanno and Hamilcar.

By the time Hamilcar Barca landed in 247 B.C. the Carthaginians were hemmed into a small enclave. He fought tenaciously and with great skill to preserve the remnants of the Carthaginian garrisons in western Sicily. Instead of reinforcing the beleaguered bases to the west, he secured a headquarters near Panormus at Mount Eryx. Eryx was an ideal sight from which to harass the Romans; with a sheer approach, its few paths were easily defended. Hamilcar waged a three-year campaign of land raids, skirmishes and ambushes, while his ships plundered and harassed the Italian coast. In one ambush he is reported to have fought 40,000 Roman troops. His strategy was quite new to the Carthaginians for he had tied up enough enemy legions to relieve the pressure on Lilybaeum without hazarding a single pitched battle. He waged a guerilla war in which the Carthaginians held the initiative, mounting surprise attacks and raids from his hill base. Hannibal would successfully implement the same tactics as his father during the later days of his second strategy in Southern Italy.

For all his skill in preserving his army from destruction and in keeping the loyalty of his men, Hamilcar's achievements between 247 and 243 would have no bearing on the outcome of the war. It became clear to Rome they could not win the war on land; either the war had to be abandoned or they must fight at sea. The Romans quickly learned the all-important lesson – to succeed in the Mediterranean area, you must have command of the sea. The Carthaginians brought all the advantages of seamanship into the naval conflict, along with the related advantages of superior ships built by the experienced shipwrights of the city's naval arsenal. In the early stages of the war Carthage, with centuries of skill behind it, found little difficulty in crushing the Romans in naval engagements; however, one of the Roman qualities, which greatly assisted them was an

ability to learn from mistakes. Taking as a model a Carthaginian warship that had run aground and been captured intact, the Romans built in a short space of time a fleet of 120 ships.¹¹⁴ Roman historians admitted their ships were slower and clumsier than their Carthaginian opponents – though the heavier character of Roman ships was probably based on a desire to carry a larger number of troops aboard. As an additional measure, the Romans equipped their first fleet with a device called the *corvus* [raven] a boarding bridge that could be winched up to a mast-like post at the bow of the ship, and released to fall across the enemy's deck when they made contact.¹¹⁵ The *corvus* could be swung round to pin an enemy vessel attacking from either side of the bow. The *corvus* undoubtedly had a dual effect, taking the Carthaginians by surprise on the one hand, and raising the morale of the Roman troops, inexperienced as they were with sea warfare, on the other. With the aid of this very simple invention Rome rendered void the rapidity and manoeuvrability of Carthaginian naval vessel.

To Carthaginian standards, Roman pilots were considered rather poor and the great defeats their fleets encountered were due much more to their ignorance of the sea than the ability of their enemies.¹¹⁶ What the Romans did have was a first-class infantry, and they set out to make full use of it. At Mylae, the overconfident Carthaginians rushed into battle without forming up in regular order, resulting in a solid Roman victory. From Mylae on, the Romans won all the subsequent major battles except one, and generally

¹¹⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 1.20.15. "The ship they now used as a model, and built their whole fleet on its pattern;..." The preliminary stages of Ecnomus (Polybius, The Histories, 2.37) and, above all Drepana (Polybius, The Histories, 1.50-1), shows what the Carthaginian navy could do, given room to manoeuvre. See also F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 95-96, 123 and 215-221.

¹¹⁵ W.L. Rodgers, Greek and Roman Naval Warfare (Annapolis, MD, 1964), page 275.

¹¹⁶ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, page 162.

retained the initiative at sea. Truly, Mylae marked the end of Carthaginian naval dominance.

For the Carthaginians, the most dispiriting feature of the 1st Roman War must have been their perceived disappointing performance at sea; and second, the sheer, incredible persistence of the Romans. The latter lost far more ships in storms than they ever did in battle, but every time they lost a fleet, they stolidly built a new one to replace it. Although Carthaginian seamen were superior in professional skills and modified their tactics to meet the enemy, Rome had shown a willingness to wage battle in their element and quickly enlarged the fleet. Four years after Mylae, the Roman fleet solidly outnumbered the Carthaginian navy and was ready for the most ambitious foreign enterprise yet entertained: the Romans intended to attack Carthage in Africa.

The Carthaginians, too, grimly replaced lost fleets, but the cost of the effort must have been enormous. The evidence of underwater archaeology indicates that all ancient ships were built like cabinetwork, their planks joined by a complex system of mortice-and-tendon joints, with the internal frame inserted only afterward as additional stiffening, the resulting construction, which modern aircraft builders would call semi-monococque, was extremely strong, but a very labour-intensive process.¹¹⁷

As the attrition wore on, the Carthaginians found their naval situation progressively worsening. Although they began the war with better ships, better commanders, and better ratings and rowing crews, they failed to capitalize on these advantages. Even though the Carthaginians successfully routed the Romans in Africa, in the end the land operations in Sicily and Africa became almost irrelevant. The decisive battle of the war took place off western Sicily; crucial because it rendered unsustainable the seven-year hold Hamilcar had on the last of the Carthaginian bases on the island.

¹¹⁷ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, page 64.

After the final climactic defeat at the Aegates, characterized as "...a massacre rather than a fight,"¹¹⁸ the Carthaginians were no longer able to engage in naval combat at all, and sued for peace.

Carthage's leaders faced not only the direct consequences of defeat, but also the long-term affect of having lost the maritime superiority they enjoyed since the battle of Alalia more than two and a half centuries earlier. Plus, the prospects of recovering their advantage remained poor. Even though Carthage remained a great port, with ample access to seamen, the mere operating experience should have restored the skills of its naval officers and ratings. Nevertheless, Carthage learned they could not count on maintaining naval initiative and superiority in any future confrontation with Rome. Even if Carthage enjoyed those advantages at the outset of a campaign, they faced the fact that Rome could once again build, lose, and replace however many fleets it took to gain the upper hand at sea. The Carthaginian failure at sea had the most profound consequences for its future. The Carthaginians had been a naval power for centuries, and their fleet equal to, if not better than, any in the Mediterranean. When the Romans began the war they had no fleet at all.¹¹⁹ By all logic, the Carthaginians should have won. In short, so long as Carthage remained primarily a maritime power, the nature of the relationship between civil and military authority was fundamentally different than republics that lay potentially at the mercy of their own armies. Carthage feared neither its mercenaries nor their commanders.

The implications of the situation reached beyond military strategy. Ancient republican states faced the problem of ensuring the reliability of their military forces in loyalty and effectiveness. The loyalty of troops remained a danger. A successful

¹¹⁸ T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage (London, 1971), page 25.

¹¹⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 1.20.9-12 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 73-74.

commander could attempt a *coup* and set himself up as a tyrant. With the soldiers as mercenaries rather than citizens, the danger compounded. Since they would have no particular loyalty to the home city, mercenaries might be more interested in surviving to collect their pay than in giving their lives in battle. Even though historians frequently point out the shortcomings of mercenaries, the Carthaginians seem to have had little difficulty with theirs.¹²⁰ The defeat of Regulus by the Spartan mercenary captain Xanthippus and the victorious resistance of Hamilcar at Eryx proved that mercenary soldiers were not necessarily inferior to the legionary. Right through the end of the 1st Roman War, Carthaginian troops fought as bravely and stubbornly as their enemies, nor were Carthage's heterogeneous armies overwhelmed by the more unified and disciplined enemies. Militarily, Carthage had performed well. Thanks to the continuity of command – as opposed to the annual changes of leadership under the Roman consular system – a factor Hannibal used to his advantage for much of the Second War. Carthaginian commanders, chosen from the ranks of the city's nobility, did not combine their commands with civil magistracies and were kept in command of armies for prolonged periods. This had all the advantages of allowing commanders to gain experience, and of forming a stronger bond with the troops they led into battle, but it opened up the danger of Caesarism. Why then did Carthage escape the double hazards of employing mercenary armies and successful generals?

Perhaps the answer is that in Carthage the senior service rested in the navy rather than the army as the ultimate repository of the armed might of the state. Had a renegade general marched against Carthage, his only hope would have been to take its formidable defenses by storm. If besieged, the city could supply itself by sea. From the sea also came the resources needed to hire more armies, and the navy itself was a repository of seasoned

¹²⁰ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, pages 29-30.

fighting men. Carthage used mercenaries, but was not ultimately dependent upon them; the final repository of armed strength lay in its fleet. Although we do not know how the Carthaginian navy was recruited, at least a part of the crews in the fleet were Carthaginian.¹²¹ It is likely that Carthaginians made up a substantial proportion of the crews. The captains of the naval vessels were certainly Carthaginian and most likely of the wealthier citizens. The trust given to the captain of a ship would have been too valuable to risk giving to someone of non-Carthaginian origin. Carthage utilized almost every useful Greek innovation; one being the *τριηραρχος*, "...which involved the 'trierarch' in actually being the captain of a trireme...and in maintaining it for a year..."¹²² This would have not only made all of the captains Carthaginian, it also reduced the state expenditure needed for a large fleet, because the *τριηραρχος* was a civil obligation of the wealthier citizens. The wealthy citizens of Carthage supported the system because they had every reason to want a strong navy protecting their shipping lanes and ports for the transportation of their goods. Other naval recruits probably were drawn from the various other Phoenician derived settlements along the coasts of Africa and Spain, men who though not Carthaginian at least shared a kindred heritage. History gives very few examples of seizures of power by admirals. What has been said of medieval Venice was probably true of Carthage as well:

"Navies have always been less liable than armies to organize *coup d'etat*, presumably because in going ashore ties of discipline customarily -- and almost necessarily -- dissolve. Sailors fresh from long weeks at sea have other things in

¹²¹ J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War, page 26.

¹²² J. Thorley, Athenian Democracy, Lancaster Pamphlets (London, 1996), page 46.

mind than seizing power on behalf of their commanders; an army, already in being, need march to the seat of power.”¹²³

The natural unit of loyalty at sea is the ship’s company, not the fleet as a whole; the captain looms larger in the minds of the crew than the commander-in-chief. If, as is probable, Carthaginian ships normally had a substantial contingent, if not an absolute majority, of native Carthaginian crewmen, the crews as a whole almost surely acquired a Carthaginian identity.

The conflict between Rome and Carthage lasted twenty-four years and robbed Carthage of the cornerstone of her northern strategy. Politically, the 1st Roman War brought the Romans to a new maturity. For most of its previous five hundred years, Roman expansion had been gradual and local, consolidating the city’s position and influence at the expense of the Etruscans, Oscans, Sabines, and Samnites, fighting guerrilla wars, razing noncompliant towns, and only occasionally risking a pitched battle. As the tribes or towns on the Italian mainland were conquered by Rome they became allies in the confederacy of Latin states. With the peace settlement Carthage lost all the islands between Sicily and Africa, including Malta. The Lipari Islands to the north of Sicily, which dominated the north-south trade routes of the Tyrrhenian Sea were ceded to Rome. But most importantly the struggle with Carthage changed the Roman pattern of alliances. Initially, much of the Sicily was overseen by Hiero’s Syracuse, but at some point a Roman praetor was appointed to govern the western part of the island, creating Rome’s first province.¹²⁴ While the Latin allies in Italy retained a certain amount of autonomy and paid no monetary tribute to Rome supplying instead men and materials for

¹²³ W.H. McNeill, Venice: The Hinge of Europe, 1081-1797 (Chicago, 1974), page 251, note 63.

¹²⁴ A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars (London, 2000), page 129-130 & Rich, J., “The Origins of the Second Punic War”, *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal*, BICS Supplement 67 (1996).

the army, the communities within the Roman province had an obligation to pay a tax rather than supply soldiers for the army. From Sicily the importation of grain in form of taxes rapidly became a major source of food for Rome itself.¹²⁵

The treaty ending the 1st Roman War signed between Hamilcar Barca and Lutatius prohibited Carthage from demobilizing the thousands of troops around Lilybaeum immediately. With Hamilcar's resignation of command, the repatriation of his mercenaries fell to Gisco, the governor of Lilybaeum. Gisco carried out the task wisely by organizing staggered departures of small groups of men in order to give the Carthaginian government time to settle the back-payment of its debts to the mercenary soldiers and their subsequent return to their various countries. However, the senate allowed the mercenaries to amass in the city, miscalculating that once they were all together it would be easier to persuade them to accept a reduction in pay.¹²⁶ The next section of this chapter investigates the consequences to Carthage and the gains for Rome from this lack of foresight.

How Did the Mercenary War Contribute to the Causes for the Second War with Rome?

By the end of the 1st Roman War, Carthage's sea power gone, the treasury exhausted, and the mercenary troops restive, the situation in Carthage grew increasingly volatile. The senate persuaded the commanding officers to empty the town of the mercenaries along with their families and to concentrate them near Sicca in the interior. In 241 B.C. the military governor and commander of Carthage's army in Africa, Hanno, addressed the troops assembled at Sicca. Explaining Carthage's financial problems, he proposed a settlement lower than the rate agreed upon by their contract. His speech was

¹²⁵ G. Rickman, The Corn Supply of Ancient Rome (Oxford, 1980), pages 12-13, 32-33, 37.

¹²⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 1.66.5.

not well received, allowing two mercenaries: Spendios, a semi-Greek fugitive slave; and Matho, one of the Libyan ringleaders, to begin a reign of terror. They pillaged the Carthaginian coffers, seized Gisco and held him captive.¹²⁷ By taking this irrevocable step, the mercenaries committed themselves to a “truceless war”.¹²⁸ This crisis known as the Mercenary War provided the setting for the sole major work of literature set in Carthage, Gustave Flaubert’s *Salâmmbo*.¹²⁹

During the 1st Roman War, the senate put pressure on the African territories in order to meet the expenses of the conflict: a demand of double tribute from the city-states; one half of all harvests of rural inhabitants. These payments, Polybius singles out, caused thousands of men to join the mercenaries.¹³⁰ Hanno, who had distinguished himself during the 1st Roman War as the general who had captured large African territories and as one of the architects of the confiscations, was unacceptable to the mercenaries and Africans as a negotiator. The resulting groundswell of support for the mercenaries shook the polity and was revealed by a genuine solidarity between the despoiled Africans and the mercenaries rising up against Carthage. City by city the African women *en masse* gave up their personal possessions and jewelry to feed the rebels’ war fund. Matho and Spendios extracted enough to give the mercenaries their back pay with enough left over to finance the rebellion.¹³¹ With nearly seventy thousand men added to the thirty thousand

¹²⁷ Polybius, *The Histories*, 1.69.12 & F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, page 135.

¹²⁸ Polybius, *The Histories*, 1.65.6 “ασπονδον πολεμον”; F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, page 131 & S. Lancel, *Hannibal*, pages 12-13.

¹²⁹ G. Flaubert, *Salâmmbo*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer (London, 1977), originally published in 1862.

¹³⁰ Polybius, *The Histories*, 1.71.1 & F.W. Walbank. *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, page 136

¹³¹ Polybius, *The Histories*, 1.72.5-6.

mercenaries, Mathos and Spendios divided the men into several corps: some to reinforce Utica and Bizerta; others to swell forces encamped near Tunis.¹³²

The senate appointed Hanno to crush the rebellion. He raised an army composed of mercenaries recruited overseas and citizens old enough to bear arms. Along with his contingent of one hundred elephants he quickly attacked near Utica with great success; unfortunately, he did not pursue the enemy and celebrated his victory prematurely. The better-disciplined mercenaries rallied, disbanding his army, which narrowly escaped total destruction. Again the senate acted and recalled Hamilcar from exile to assist Hanno. However, the ill feeling between the two generals became a turning point in Carthaginian military policy. The Carthaginians decided to allow the army to choose which general would remain commander-in-chief. Polybius indicates that it was the Assembly of the People, which took this decision, affirming the growing political importance of the Assembly of the People.¹³³

Hamilcar was quickly able to reverse the situation. He re-organized the citizen troops, brought in new mercenaries, and started a program of psychological pressure against his former veterans. He cut off the mercenaries camped before Carthage, driving them into a state of famine. Using Carthage's navy, Hamilcar was able to obtain supplies by sea, which forced the besiegers to lift their stranglehold.

After Matho and Spendios formed the mercenaries along with the African contingents commanded by the Libyan chief, Zarzas into an army of 50,000 men,¹³⁴ Hamilcar's experience and skill in manoeuvring led the two armies in a southerly

¹³² Polybius, The Histories, 1.82.11 & 1.73.7.

¹³³ Polybius, The Histories, 1.82.5.

¹³⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 1.84.3. See F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 146 where he states this is an exaggeration, and is likely to "have been no more than 20,000."

direction toward the promontory of Cape Bon. There he managed to attack nearly 40,000 men in a gorge, which Polybius says “occurred near the place called the Saw; it got its name from its resemblance to the tool so called.”¹³⁵ The trap was sprung. When the rebelling troops ran out of food, they were forced to eat the flesh of their prisoners and then some of their slaves. Their leaders, Spendios and Zarras soon came to terms with Hamilcar. Learning that their principal leaders had surrendered to Hamilcar, the Africans, who were not privy to the pact, believed they had been betrayed. They rushed Hamilcar who in turn had them trampled to death by his elephants.¹³⁶ Matho, however, still held Tunis.

At this time the senate attempted reconciliation between Hanno and Hamilcar, once again obliging them to act together, possibly indicating a temporary return of strength to the Carthaginian oligarchy and allowing Hanno to remain as the leader of the anti-Barcid faction for the next thirty-five years.¹³⁷ It is possible that the reconciliation forced Matho into a decisive battle and defeat. The revenge Carthage exacted upon Matho and his African troops were used as a symbol of Carthaginian mastery over all its African subjects who had enjoyed short-lived freedom.¹³⁸ With this act of barbarity, all of Africa submitted allegiance to Carthage. It is true that Hamilcar is attributed with re-establishing the peace throughout Africa; even so, he also managed to extend the boundaries within

¹³⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 1.85.7.

“ὅν συμβαίνει δια τὴν ὁμοιοτητα τοῦ σχήματος πρὸς τὸ νῦν εἰρημένον ὄργανον ταύτης τετευχέναι τῆς προσηγορίας.” F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 147 states this formation is no longer discernable.

¹³⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 1.85.6.

¹³⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 1.87.3 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 148.

¹³⁸ Diodorus Siculus, The Library of History, 26.33.

the African state.¹³⁹ Even with these territorial expansions, the consequences of the Mercenary War resulted in a tremendous loss of influence for Carthage. Additionally, Rome, probably, concerned about Hamilcar's rise to power in Carthage at the expense of Hanno who represented the oligarchic party, hoped to inflict damage on his prestige.¹⁴⁰

Even while Hamilcar was busy fighting Spendios and Matho in Africa, the mercenaries serving the Carthaginian garrison in Sardinia mutinied, murdering their officers. Later they persuaded the punitive expedition sent by Carthage against them to renege the military and join the mutiny. Together the mercenaries soon gained control over the entire island and attempted to make an alliance with Rome. At first the Roman Senate refused instead respecting the protection offered to each sides' allies set down in the treaty of 241. While additional Carthaginian troops were sent to besiege the garrison, Italian traders provisioned the mutineers with food and arms. Perhaps the most significant step in escalation came when the Roman Senate sent a commission to Carthage following reports that Roman traders dealing with the rebels had been arrested or killed.¹⁴¹ Polybius attributes Carthage's eventual loss of Sardinia as compensation for the capture of these Italian traders during the Mercenary War.¹⁴² Since the merchants had merely been imprisoned and the Carthaginians agreed to their return, this seems an unlikely excuse.

In 237 the mutinous mercenaries were expelled by the native population and again approached the Roman Senate. This time ignoring the treaty signed between the two

¹³⁹ Cornelius Nepos, Great Generals of Foreign Nations, *Hamilcar*, 2.5.

¹⁴⁰ G.C. & C. Picard, The Life and Death of Carthage, pages 208-209.

¹⁴¹ Polybius, The Histories, 1.83.5-11 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 146.

¹⁴² Polybius, The Histories, 3.28.3 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 356.

states, Rome made an expedition ready to assist the Sardinians; Carthage sent an embassy to Rome in hopes to recover their possession of the island, whereas the Romans considered Carthage's actions a hostile act against Rome.¹⁴³ Despite opposition from the native Sardinians, the chance to secure the area was more than Rome could resist. Using the pretext that Corsica as well was a threat to Italy, Rome proceeded to annex both Sardinia and Corsica. When Carthage ventured to protest, Rome declared war and then increased the amount that Carthage was to pay in return for a humiliating peace. Weakened by over three years of war against the mercenaries, Carthage ceded Sardinia and Corsica. Rome required the payment of an extra indemnity 1,200 talents as a stipulation in additional clauses to the treaty of 241.¹⁴⁴

How the Loss of Sardinia Affected Carthage and Hannibal

Sardinia enters the history of Carthage in the middle of the sixth century B.C. in a defeat suffered by the Carthaginian king Malchus on the island.¹⁴⁵ Because Sardinia was a key factor in domination of the western Mediterranean, Carthage began military action there again toward the end of the sixth century. By 535 B.C. the Carthaginians and Etruscan allied victory against the Phocaeons at Alalia in Corsica secured Sardinia against Greek expansion. Although at this time Corsica came under the control of the Etruscans, it is clear the island became a neutral territory more under Carthage's influence until the consequences resulting from the Mercenary War. In Polybius' text regarding the first treaty between Carthage and Rome he states "The phrasing of this treaty shows that they

¹⁴³ Polybius, The Histories, 1.88.10-11, & 3.10.1-2 and F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 149-150 & 313-314.

¹⁴⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.27.7 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 355.

¹⁴⁵ S. Lancel, Carthage: A History, pages 111-112 & B.H. Warmington, Carthage, pages 42-45.

consider Sardinia and Libya as their own...”¹⁴⁶ In fact, in the treaty of 509 Carthage appeared to be the sole guarantor for commercial transactions on the island of Sardinia and by the fourth century Carthage had extended its control over the entire island. The second treaty, signed in 348, reaffirms “No Roman shall trade or found a city in Sardinia and Libya...”¹⁴⁷

The seizure of Sardinia highlighted Carthage’s current weakness and created a far greater legacy of bitterness and resentment towards Rome than their initial defeat at the Aegates in the 1st Roman War. Additionally, the annexation of Sardinia and Corsica reignited the fears Carthage had for the possibility of future hostilities between the two republics. Because these islands lay on the trade routes to the West they were strategically necessary to Carthage’s military, as well as being sources of timber, ore, and additional trading stations.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.23.5. “ἐκ δε τούτων των συνθηκων περι μεν Σαρδονος και Λιβυης...”

¹⁴⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.24.11.

“ἐν Σαρδονι και Λιβυη μηδεις Ῥωμαίων μητ’ ἐμπορευεσθω μητε πολιν κτιζεται...” & F.W.

Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 348-349.

¹⁴⁸ For more details on the 1st Roman War and its aftermath, see N. Bagnall, The Punic Wars, pages 49-107; Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal, pages 80-88; B. Caven, The Punic Wars, pages 1-66; T.A. Dorey & D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, pages 1-28; A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars (London, 2000), pages 65-133; S. Lancel, Carthage: A History, pages 362-372; G.C. & C. Picard, The Life and Death of Carthage, pages 182-201; H.H. Scullard, “Carthage and Rome”, pages 537-569; B.H. Warmington, Carthage, pages 154-185; and especially J.F. Lazenby, The First Punic War for a very detailed account of the War. For the 1st Roman War at sea, see L. Casson, The Ancient Mariners: Seafarers and Sea Fighters of the Mediterranean in Ancient Times, 2nd Ed. (Princeton, NJ, 1991), pages 143-151; and especially W.L. Rodgers, Greek and Roman Naval Warfare, pages 266-304.

The Barca Family and Spain

Prior to the Mercenary War, the Carthaginian oligarchy believed officers chosen from among the aristocracy could lead its mercenaries, however, they consistently destroyed their commanders' prestige by exercising the most rigid supervision. Four of these nobles suffered crucifixion during the war for having sustained defeat. Carthage only realized its mistake when Regulus threatened the city. Delegating command to a foreigner, the Spartan Xanthippus, saved the republic. The ensuing revolt by the mercenaries almost immediately showed it impossible to re-establish the old military system. Thus, Hamilcar's skill as a general, coupled with his talent in diplomacy led to his growth as the leader of Carthage's popular party.

The immediate emergency of the Mercenary War ended with Carthage facing still the longer-term problem of re-establishing her power and prosperity. The peace at any price party, concerned solely with seeing its mercantile fortunes revive, was prepared to conspire against Hamilcar with the Roman enemy. The Roman Senate regarded the policies advocated by Hanno as advantageous to Rome and those of Hamilcar as a threat. Hanno's political popularity rested on his domination of the North African tribesmen from whom he exacted high taxes. Representing the landholding interests of Carthage, Hanno's policy included the expansion of North Africa and the consolidation of Carthaginian power in the continent.¹⁴⁹ This policy developed in the century when a political crisis caused crushing defeats in Sicily combined with an unfavourable trade balance creating an economic crisis that drove the Carthaginians to rely on their own resources.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ T.A. Dorey & D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, pages 29-31.

¹⁵⁰ G.C. & C. Picard, Daily Life in Carthage: At the Time of Hannibal, trans. A.E. Foster (London, 1961), pages 122-127.

After the annexation of Sardinia it was clear to Hamilcar together with a number of members of other ruling families that Rome could not be trusted. With much of the Mediterranean now firmly in their control, together with their newly established command of the sea, it would only be a matter of time before they made another attempt into North Africa. Therefore, Hamilcar offered an alternate solution to Hanno's – the extension of the policy that had been followed more than two centuries earlier after the disaster of Himera. In that crisis, the Carthaginians recouped their losses in Sicily by transforming their loose hegemony over their tribal neighbours in North Africa into a territorial state. Hamilcar now set forth to do the same on a much larger scale in Spain.¹⁵¹ Carthage already maintained trading ports along the coasts, had conscripted some of her best troops from Spain's tribes, and established settlements such as Gades on the Atlantic coast, where neither Greek nor Roman had yet penetrated. Although remote, Spain presented great strategic potential for Carthage. On the eastern coast were natural harbours from which, in conjunction with Balearic and African bases, they might still control an important part of the western Mediterranean. More importantly, without naval power, it would still be possible for Carthage to operate offensively against Rome from the peninsula by way of Gaul. In short, the acquisition of Spain would give Carthage the military advantages which had served Rome so well – a vast and accessible reserve of fighting men, and an overland route to their objectives.

Hamilcar and his associates were a larger more powerful group who saw clearly the fate of Carthage without bold guidance. This turned the foreign policy of Carthage into a completely new channel. Rather than accept the isolationist strategies of Hanno, Hamilcar planned an expansionist policy of here-to-fore unparallel scale. For centuries

¹⁵¹ Polybius, The Histories, 2.1.5-9 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 151-153.

the power of Carthage had rested in the oligarchy, but with his political victory it moved into the hands of the people and the Barca clan. By abdicating its authority to Hamilcar, the Carthaginian oligarchy resigned itself to recognizing a personal power freed from all control. For the next forty years Hamilcar Barca and his family, known as the “Barcine Faction,”¹⁵² controlled the government and Spain became most crucial to Carthage’s rise in power.¹⁵³

Despite the fact that some members of the oligarchy that ruled Carthage learned little from their first war with Rome other than a reluctant willingness to entrust the fate of their empire to Hamilcar – the Romans learned a great deal. The aspirations of the Romans, who had expanded into a confederation of small Italian states, had been completely transformed by their struggle against a mercantile and maritime power like Carthage. The taste of victory on a wider domain than the land led to a change of attitude that would continue to torture the proud character of Hamilcar. For he maintained the Carthaginian senate surrendered Sicily in a hasty loss of hope, and that the Romans wrongly appropriated Sardinia and Corsica – and even imposed an indemnity on them – in the midst of their Mercenary War.

While the Barca family’s policies in Spain were suggestive of Macedonian imperialism rather than previous Carthaginian endeavours, when Hamilcar assumed power he developed a plan to make up Carthage’s losses. Nevertheless, to be profitable, the conquest of Spain must be rapid and total. Previously it had taken Carthage centuries

¹⁵² Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, Vol. VI, trans. F.G. Moore, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1940), 21.2.4 and 23.12.6. “factionis Barcinae”

¹⁵³ See B. Rankov, “The Second Punic War at Sea”, *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal*, BICS Supplement 67, 1996, for more information on the importance of Sardinia as a naval base, particularly page 55.

to conquer their territory in Africa. Therefore, every circumstance forced Hamilcar to replace the traditional methods of Carthaginian generals by those which enabled Alexander to conquer the Persian Empire in merely ten years. In 237 B.C. he and his son Hannibal arrived in Spain and for eight years, Hamilcar battled his way east then north as far as Alicante. Intimidated by his brilliance an increasing number of native chiefs joined him. The relationship between the Carthaginians and their Spanish allies is an interesting one. First, the Carthaginians had a superiority in metal-working techniques and secondly, they came from an old and civilized race, inheriting from centuries of warfare, a knowledge of strategy, tactics, and discipline when in combat. The Iberians of southern Spain, partly of Berber stock from Africa, were incapable of withstanding either the horsemen or the organized infantry the Carthaginians brought against them.

Through his policies of military and diplomatic means, Hamilcar established control of the east coast south of Cabo de la Nao and the Baetis Valley,¹⁵⁴ “subjugating Spain to the Carthaginians.”¹⁵⁵ He set forth to transform what had been a loose hegemony into outright control, and did so in a series of campaigns lasting from 238 or 237, until he drowned crossing a river following a military reverse in 229.¹⁵⁶ Not only did Hamilcar support his endeavours in Spain, in addition “...the yield of the mines was greatly increased under the direct Punic exploitation...” with the effect that, “...the finances of Carthage were soon restored to prosperity.”¹⁵⁷ His successful efforts furnished the much-

¹⁵⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 2.1.7 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 152.

¹⁵⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 2.1.6. “την Ἰβηριαν πραγματα τοις Καρχηδονιοις.”

¹⁵⁶ B. Caven, The Punic Wars, page 78.

¹⁵⁷ M. Cary & H.H. Scullard, A History of Rome: Down to the Reign of Constantine, 3rd Ed. (London, 1975), page 124.

needed wealth lost in the war with Rome and further accelerated the growth of internal political discord at Carthage.¹⁵⁸

The rule of the Barca family, passed by Hamilcar to his son-in-law Hasdrubal and then to his son Hannibal, lasted for nearly fifty years. From 247 until 201 B.C. the family bore the principal burden of responsibility for the wars against Rome and the constant criticism of Hanno and his peace party. It is important to note that Hamilcar's life work was a constant, unremitting effort to prepare Carthage for war, then to make war on its archenemy, Rome. As I shall argue in a later chapter his hatred for Rome became a family purpose, rendered only more so by the internal opposition of Hanno's faction. It is important to this discussion that nothing of what the Carthaginians may have recorded about the Barca family survives, for the destiny of the Barcas lay in Carthage's greatest struggle against Rome for the wealth and control of the Mediterranean area.

To understand how the Carthaginians might have progressed, a look at the American colonies will bring into focus the pattern of development. We know that completely different cultural groups settled the American colonies with the well-bred, upper classes from the south of England moving into Virginia and forming the basis of the Southern landed gentry of Virginia and the Carolinas. "Descendants of gallant knights and ladies fair, southerners became the last society to embrace the remnants of old European traditions of the Middle Ages, when a man's word was his sacred pledge, and the sanctity of womanhood was defended with near religious fervor."¹⁵⁹ The South for example, was a distinctive society of large landowners, closely connected by blood, marriage, and friendship much in the same manner as the Carthaginian elite.¹⁶⁰ The

¹⁵⁸ T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, page 144.

¹⁵⁹ M.A. Grissom, Southern by the Grace of God (Gretna, LA, 1990), page 31.

¹⁶⁰ P.C. Nagel, The Lees of Virginia (New York, 1990), page 7.

plantations were both homes and business enterprises for the southern privileged. They were the largest, most commercialized, and most efficient specialized agricultural enterprises of their day, producing the bulk of the South's staple crops of tobacco, cotton, sugar, rice, and hemp. Their proprietors were entrepreneurs who aspired to and sometimes, after a generation or two, achieved the status of a cultivated landed aristocracy. Many distinguished themselves not only in agriculture, but also in the professions, in the military, in government service, and in scientific and cultural endeavors. They were wealthy, prestigious, and powerful, often the political as well as the economic leaders of the society.

Even though the Southern planters were ambitious to augment their wealth, they became an important driving force in the economic and political development of new territories and states in the Southwest. Their commodities accounted for more than half of America's exports, and the plantations themselves were important markets for the products of northern industry. In short, they played a crucial role in the development of a national market economy. Carthage, as seen in the following illustration by B.H. Warmington, suggests the interaction and sway of the aristocracy of Carthage could have developed quite similarly to the South.

“The same must be said of the wealth of the aristocracy, but what form their participation in trade took can only be conjecture, for lack of evidence. It is to be presumed that the nobles financed, or more probably owned, numbers of ships engaged in trade, and took their profits from the voyages, the most profitable no doubt being those to the west. It is not to be supposed that the Hanno of Plautus was numbered among the senators of Carthage, even though he is described as rich and noble. It is also possible that some wealthy Carthaginians had interests in

Carthaginian industry. But after the conquest of the northern part of Tunisia there was another source of wealth, land.”¹⁶¹

It is on this Southern foundation that we can build the character development of Hannibal as a member of the elite aristocracy of Carthage since both the Lees and the Barcas were wealthy landowners and both belonged the aristocracy of the day.¹⁶² Henry Lee, known as “Light-Horse” Harry, advanced to the rank of major and commanded three companies of infantry in the American Revolution; he became the post-Revolution governor of Virginia, as well as close friend of the first American President George Washington.¹⁶³ Robert was the fourth child of Harry Lee and Ann Hill Carter. Later Robert would marry the First Lady’s niece, Mary Custis, in an unprecedented match.

We must consider at this point Hamilcar’s immediate relations to understand the passage of family rule in Spain. Hamilcar, by his first wife had three daughters whose names we have no record. The eldest married Bomilcar, admiral of the Carthaginian navy from 215 to 212. They produced a son named Hanno who served under his uncle, Hannibal at the battle of Cannae. Hamilcar’s second daughter married Hasdrubal the Fair before Hamilcar and Hasdrubal departed for Spain. She must have died shortly after their departure because Hasdrubal later married the daughter of an Iberian king. His third daughter was promised to Naravas, a Numidian chief who assisted Hamilcar in the Mercenary War.¹⁶⁴ Hamilcar’s fourth child and first son, Hannibal ‘he who finds favour with Baal’ was born in 247, the year he was sent to Sicily. His other sons followed within

¹⁶¹ B.H. Warmington, Carthage, page 137. See also, A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, pages 28-29 & G.C. & C. Picard, Daily Life in Carthage, pages 81-98.

¹⁶² T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, page 614.

¹⁶³ P.C. Nagel, The Lees of Virginia, page 19.

¹⁶⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 1.78.

a few years: Hasdrubal, and Mago. All of Hamilcar's sons were born and trained for battle against Rome.

Hamilcar's intense hatred of Rome became Hannibal's lesson from the first and his education was chiefly directed to the accomplishment of war. Nothing demonstrates this better than Polybius' supported view of Hamilcar's motivation by recounting an anecdote which Hannibal related while he was at the court of Antiochus III in the 190s. Just before leaving to take up his new command in Spain, Hamilcar Barca placed a sacrifice at the altar of Zeus. After he received a favourable omen, he called his nine-year old son, Hannibal, to his side and asked the boy if he would like to accompany him to Spain. Hannibal responded enthusiastically, begging permission to go. Hamilcar placed the boy's hand on the sacrifice and made him swear an oath "never to be a friend to the Romans."¹⁶⁵ Hannibal supposedly told this story to convince Antiochus of his allegiance. In later Roman works the oath's wording becomes stronger, with Hannibal swearing to be always an "enemy" of Rome.¹⁶⁶

Hannibal remained in his father's Iberian camp, constantly in the field, for nine years. One tradition claims Hamilcar deliberately sacrificed himself to save his young son in an ambush by a Celtiberian tribe known as the Oretani in 229 B.C.¹⁶⁷ Another source describes Hamilcar as exhibiting exemplary courage in the battle just outside of Helike

¹⁶⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.11.7. "...ἱερὸν ὀμνῦναι μηδέποτε Ῥωμαίοις εὐνοῆσειν." & F.W.

Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. 1, page 315.

¹⁶⁶ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 21.1.4. "... bind himself with an oath that so soon as he should be able he would be the declared enemy of the Roman Republic." It is an interesting, though improbable, idea that Hamilcar frightened Hannibal into taking the oath by showing him an altar which was used for the sacrifice of children. For more on the Punic Religion, see S. Lancel, Carthage: A History, pages 193-256.

¹⁶⁷ Diodorus Siculus, The Library of History, 25.10.4 & 25.19.1.

where he is killed.¹⁶⁸ Hasdrubal succeeded Hamilcar as commander of the army in Iberia and Hannibal returned to Carthage to continue his studies. Educated by a Greek tutor, Sosylus, Hannibal spoke Greek, Latin, Phoenician as well as his native Punic.¹⁶⁹ While Carthage borrowed much from the Greeks, including their military tactics, Dio Cassius states that Hannibal studied all the Greeks could teach. Yet again in our correlating assessment, Robert E. Lee also followed in his father's military footsteps graduating second in his class from the prestigious United States Military Academy at Westpoint.

Upon Hamilcar Barca's death, his son-in-law, and chief naval officer, Hasdrubal becomes his successor.¹⁷⁰ It is unclear whether the home government authorized or merely acquiesced the decision; however, the implications of his selection represented a giant step toward making Carthaginian Spain a quasi-hereditary principality. Nor is the form of his appointment known; it is only plausible speculation to suppose that Hasdrubal's officers selected him, and then perhaps he was acclaimed by the troops.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 2.1.8; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 152; Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.41.3 & Diodorus Siculus, The Library of History, 25.10.

¹⁶⁹ Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 13.3.

¹⁷⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 2.1.9 & Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 21.2.3.

¹⁷¹ Later, Polybius details a very different process for the appointment of Hannibal. He states, "when news reached them from their armies that the soldiers had unanimously chosen Hannibal as their commander, they hastened to summon a general assembly of the commons, which unanimously ratified the choice of the soldiers." Polybius, The Histories, 3.13.4. It is likely the legitimate means of succession for a general overseas is the latter of the two. At the appointment of Hannibal the "statesmen" in Carthage did not want the troops overseas to think they had the ultimate decision of their commander and wanting to ensure their supremacy over such a decision, they formally ratified the appointment of Hannibal. See also F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 316.

The ancient sources give us the impression that Hasdrubal was more an administrator and diplomat than strictly a general. It is nevertheless true that he was a good soldier, but for the most part he seems to have been still greater as a ruler. By pleasing manners and political dealing with the native tribes and friendships formed with their petty chiefs, he furthered the cause of his country more than by force of arms.¹⁷² Until his death, assassinated at the hands of a Celtiberian tribesman, he followed a policy of consolidation, securing his hold on southeastern Spain.¹⁷³ He struck coins with his image and founded a new capital for the province, to which he gave the same name as Carthage itself; the Romans later called it Carthago Nova, and it survives today as Cartagena. Under his leadership the area subject to the Carthaginians was extended from Gades in the west to Carthago Nova in the east, and northwards as far as Castulo. This fortress city dominated the Sierra Morena, which now provided the Carthaginians with a rich source of silver. It was on the basis of this area of conquest that Hasdrubal proceeded to expand. Domestically, he supported the cultivation of salt, established a fish-curing industry, and encouraged the production and exportation of esparto grass. Militarily, he recruited and trained Spaniards as mercenaries and formed alliances with Spanish chiefs.

In 224 B.C., at the age of twenty-five, Hannibal returns to Spain as the commander of Hasdrubal's cavalry. Livy, in the following passage, envisions the most dominant portrait of the young Hannibal to be written by an ancient historian.

“Hannibal was sent to Spain, where he was no sooner come than he won the favour of the entire army. The old soldiers thought that Hamilcar was restored to them as he had been in his youth; they beheld the same lively expression and piercing eye, the same cast of countenance and features. But he soon brought it to

¹⁷² Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 31.2.5.

¹⁷³ B. Caven, *The Punic Wars*, pages 9-84.

pass that his likeness to his father was the least consideration in gaining him support. Never was the same nature more adaptable to things the most diverse – obedience and command. And so one could not readily have told whether he were dearer to the general or the army. When any bold or difficult deed was to be done, there was no one whom Hasdrubal liked better to entrust with it, nor did any other leader inspire his men with greater confidence or daring. To reckless courage incurring dangers he united the greatest judgment when in the midst of them. No toil could exhaust his body or overcome his spirit. Of heat and cold he was equally tolerant. His consumption of meat and drink was determined by natural desire, not by pleasure. His times of waking and sleeping were not marked off by day or night: what time remained when his work was done he gave to sleep, which he did not court with a soft bed or stillness, but was seen repeatedly by many lying on the ground wrapped in a common soldier's cloak amongst the sentinels and outguards. His dress was in no way superior to that of his fellows, but his arms and horses were conspicuous. Both of horsemen and of foot-soldiers he was undoubtedly the first – foremost to enter battle, and last to leave it when the fighting had begun... he served for the space of three years under Hasdrubal, omitting nothing that should be done or seen by one who was to become a great commander.”¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 21.4. “Missus Hannibal in Hispaniam primo statim adventu omnem exercitum in se convertit; Hamilcarem iuvenem redditum sibi veteres milites credere ; eundem vigorem in voltu vimque in oculis, habitum oris lineamentaue intueri. Dein brevi effecit ut pater in se minimum momentum ad favorem conciliandum esset; nunquam ingenium idem ad res diversissimas, parendum atque imperandum, habilis fuit. Itaque haud facile discerneres utrum imperatori an exercitui carior esset; neque Hasdrubal alium quemquam praeficere malle, ubi quid fortiter ac strenue agendum esset, neque milites alio duce plus confidere aut audere. Plurimum audaciae ad percula capessenda, plurimum consilii inter ipsa percula erat: nullo labore aut corpus fatigari aut animus vinci poterat; caloris ac frigoris patientia par; cibi potionisque

This influential image survives today as the persistent representation of Hannibal.

Following Hasdrubal's death, the troops in Spain chose a new commander-in-chief, with no intervention by Carthage. At the young age of twenty-six, the succeeding Barca was Hamilcar Barca's son – Hannibal. Spain gave the Barcas and Carthage a formidable military force and the wealth to support it. Carthaginian recruiting officers had long been hiring Spanish mercenaries and the Barcid province brought a large part of this pool of military manpower directly under their control. It was this resource that allowed Hannibal to prosecute the war so effectively. In Polybius' version of the oath against Rome, Hannibal inherited the war with Rome from his father. The conception of the plan no doubt began with his father, but Hannibal truly gave the project its impetus.¹⁷⁵ Hannibal's father and later his brother-in-law were responsible for laying the foundation upon which he was to build. There can be little doubt that the dream of using Spain as a base from which to attack the Romans was always present in Hamilcar's mind, although difficult to prove.

Apparently, the political relationship between the new 'Barcid Empire' in Spain and the metropolitan government of Carthage was fraught with ambiguities. On one hand, neither Hamilcar nor either of his successors ever engaged in outright Caesarism; and when they marched it was not on Carthage, but toward Rome. To all outward appearance

desiderio naturali non voluptate modus finitus; vigiliarum somnique nec die nec nocte discriminata tempora; id quod gerendis rebus superesset quieti datum; ea neque molli strato neque silentio accersita; multi saepe militari sagulo opertum humi iacentem inter custodias stationesque militum conspexerunt. Vestitus nihil inter aequales excellens; arma atque equi conspiciebantur. Equitum peditumque idem longe primus erat; princeps in proelium ibat, ultimus conserto proelio excedebat... triennio sub Hasdrubale imperatore meruit nulla re quae agenda videndaque magno futuro duci esset praetermissa."

¹⁷⁵ For an interesting depiction of familial devotion, see Plautus, *Poenulus*, trans. P. Nixon, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. IV (Cambridge, Mass., 1932), pages 2-11 and 95-143.

the Barcas ruled Spain as the loyal proconsuls or viceroys of Carthage. Yet, at least after the initial campaigns, the effective control of the government of Carthage over the Barcas remained uncertain at best. Hamilcar raised his own armies, which were surely loyal personally to him, and their loyalty to the Barcas continued through their subsequent selection of Hasdrubal and Hannibal. Their natural attachment was to their commanders rather than to a distant civil authority in Carthage, which most of the soldiers had never seen. To Hannibal's policies, Hanno led a small group of political enemies of the Barcas into opposition. They declared that Hannibal acted without the authority of the government of Carthage and this "...was accepted as true by Fabius Pictor and passed into the historical tradition."¹⁷⁶ In a later age, Roman armies made up of Roman citizens proved loyal to their commanders rather than to the Republic; the same must have been true *a fortiori* of the Barcid armies in which very few Carthaginians served. The Barcas depended on Carthage itself for nothing because they had their own sources of pay and supply for their troops. Regardless of the actual facts had any of the Barcas chosen to sever their relationship with Carthage and set up an independent Barcid kingdom in Spain, there is no evidence to support that Carthage could have done anything to prevent it.

"Fabius, the Roman annalist, says that besides the outrage on the Saguntines, a cause of the war was Hasdrubal's ambition and love for power. He tells us how, having acquired a great dominion in Spain, he arrived in Africa and attempted to abolish the constitution of Carthage and change the form of government to a monarchy."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ T.A. Dorey & D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, page 31.

¹⁷⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.8.1-2.

“Φαβιος δε φησιν ο 'Ρωμαικος συγγραφευς αμα τω κατα Ζακανθαιους αδικηματι και την

But Fabius' perception cannot be completely trusted as fact.

“On the events of his own time, the struggle with Carthage, Fabius wrote more carefully, but the apologetic nature of his work, the desire to impress the Greek speaking world, led to grave distortions of fact; Polybius outspokenly compares his affection for the Roman cause with that of a lover.”¹⁷⁸

Nevertheless, it is clear from what information remains that the successive Barcas preserved all the outward forms of loyalty to Carthage. Carthage in turn seems to have been unwilling to put their loyalty to the test. From the point of view of the government, there might have been little to gain and much to lose in attempting to do so. Whatever the potential significance of founding Carthago Nova, the Barcas had given no overt offense or cause for complaint. On the contrary, Hamilcar and Hasdrubal had more or less single-handedly restored Carthage's international position; having lost its old maritime dominion in the Western Mediterranean, Carthage now commanded a new land dominion in Spain, with all the wealth, power, and prestige that implied.

Moreover, to recall any of the Barcas and send some other commander in his place was to take a double risk. First, the threat of dismissal or worse might be just the goad that led to a breach, and either the loss of the empire in Spain or the march of the

‘ΑΣδρουβου πλεονεξίαν και φιλαρχίαν αίτιαν γενεσθαι του κατ’ ‘Αννίβαν πολέμου. εκείνον γαρ μεγάλην άνειληφота την δυναστείαν εν τοις κατ’ ‘Ιβηρίαν τοποις, μετα ταυτα παραγενομενον επι Λιβυην επιβαλεσθαι καταλυσαντα τους νομους εις μοναρχίαν περιστησαι το πολιτευμα των Καρχηδονίων.” It is interesting to note that Aristotle in Politics mentions that Carthage was never subjected to the threat of a tyrant. Polybius goes on to state in 3.8.10-11 that he disputes Fabius Pictor's version of the story. See also F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 310-311 & 312.

¹⁷⁸ P.G. Walsh, Livy, page 118. Polybius' statement can be found in I.14.2 where he places Philinus in the same case, but for the Carthaginians.

army on Carthage itself. Secondly, if the viceroy loyally obeyed, there could be no guarantee that any commander sent in his place would be able to command the loyalty of his troops or the obedience of the conquered subjects. The dominion in Spain, if placed in inexperienced hands, might be lost even more rapidly than it had been won. Thus, the Carthaginians had little apparent reason to meddle with a situation that had worked out very well for them. However, in doing so, they mortgaged their own future to the policies and ambitions of the Barcas. This became evident when, under Hannibal, Barcid policies and ambitions in Spain drew Carthage into the second war against Rome.¹⁷⁹

To further understand the cultural differences between the opposing factions within Carthage we can study the evolution of the northern and southern population as they developed as a basis for the enmity between the two groups. In addition to the upper class from England who emigrated into Virginia and formed the basis of the Southern aristocracy of Virginia and the Carolinas, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the population of the North consisted of a far greater number of new immigrants. The struggles between these two populations included many clashes of interest and issues quite apart from those concerning morals and contrasting labor systems. But an even more far-reaching aspect was that their commercial interests had come into conflict, as those between Rome and Carthage.

¹⁷⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 2.35; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 310-312 & Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 21.3.1. For more on Carthaginian Spain, see A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, pages 136-138; S. Lancel, Carthage: A History, pages 376-380; S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 25-43; G.C. & C. Picard, The Life and Death of Carthage, pages 209-222; J. Prevas, Hannibal Crosses the Alps: The Enigma Re-examined, pages 39-46; J.S. Richardson, Hispaniae: Spain and the Development of Roman Imperialism 218-82 B.C. (Cambridge, 1986), pages 18-20; J.S. Richardson, The Romans in Spain (Oxford, 1996), pages 16-24 & H.H. Scullard, "The Carthaginians in Spain", The Cambridge Ancient History: Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C., 2nd Ed., Vol. VIII (Cambridge, 1989), pages 17-31.

The North had built up a large and extensive manufacturing economy, and to foster that enterprise it demanded a protective tariff, the burden of which fell on the South in two ways. First, because Southerners were large consumers of manufactured goods from their robust economy and, second, as agriculture producers and exporters, it was essential for their commerce to be able to exchange their cotton and tobacco for manufactured goods in Europe. Otherwise the merchant ships would have to return home empty, and the Southern exporters would have to be paid in hard cash for their commodities, meaning lower profits for the South. When these same exporters chose to import European goods this meant a high tax, increasing the cost to the Southern consumer and enriching the federal coffers at the expense of the South, to benefit the Northern interests.

The point is that there exists, in spite of obvious differences, a disquieting suggestion of similarity between the two crises and the pattern of their development. In America the Puritan conception of broad trade and industry control by a central government, which was at odds with the Southern view of a state's right to determine its own market, is what the War Between the States was fought over. And because the South was too large for the North to merely assimilate, only by winning the war would the Northern conception of government, based on a culture alien to the South, be imposed on every state. Using this idea we can recognize that Carthage had created a feudal empire with no sense of 'central' loyalty, whereas Rome, had forged a confederation of states, which held together even when gravely threatened. Once more, Carthage remained too large for Rome to absorb, only by defeating Carthage could Rome control with authority. They refused to treat Carthage as an equal. Sardinia was just the first blatant example of Rome's attitude toward Carthage, which continued with Rome's repeated interventions in Spain. Since Carthage's tribute to Rome should have been completely paid by 220, there was no reason for Carthage to behave as a subordinate to Rome. Although weakened by

their defeat in the 1st Roman War and later the mercenary rebellion, Carthage remained a large and wealthy state with extensive territories in Africa and Spain and its citizens must have felt they were Rome's equal. The Carthaginian desire to reaffirm its independent power was a natural occurrence however threatening it might have been to Rome. Both Rome and Carthage had ample resources for making war and were militarily suspicious and even hostile to each other. The Carthaginian military increase in Spain was a defensive measure in order to protect against such arbitrary Roman actions as the theft of Sardinia.

Before 219 B.C. the Carthaginians had consistently backed down to Roman demands, and it is probable the Roman Senate expected them to do so once again when the legation demanded Hannibal not attack Saguntum. Hannibal, a young nobleman and head of a powerful army, was already assured of his ability to command. Although some at Carthage opposed Hannibal and hoped for peace, there was certainly a majority among the aristocracy who saw no reason for the Carthaginian state to submit to Rome's arrogant demands.¹⁸⁰

Hannibal's Involvement in the Instigation of War

The question of who was morally responsible for the war – Rome, Carthage, or Hannibal personally – has been a subject of debate since the outbreak of the 2nd Roman War. Why did Hannibal choose to ignore Rome's warnings about Saguntum? Why did Rome make an issue of Saguntum? Why did Carthage back Hannibal's decision over Saguntum? These questions all ask for an explanation and the answers contribute to who bears ultimately responsibility for the war.

¹⁸⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 21.5.1-2.

If we are to believe as Polybius intimates Hannibal merely acted on the need for revenge;¹⁸¹ however, in reality the necessity for Carthage to establish control in Spain as firmly as possible was essential for their continued prosperity. If Hannibal had backed down over Saguntum, Roman interference in Spain would surely have escalated. Even if Carthage had backed down as they had over Sardinia, any Spanish community who felt threatened by Carthage would have sought Roman protection thereby ending Carthaginian domination in Spain. Perhaps Hannibal's defiant position proved too popular with the people of Carthage. Rome may have assumed the time right to confront Carthage – their commander in Spain was so young and largely unknown in Rome. In addition no Roman thought the war would be fought on their home ground. As we shall investigate in the next chapter, the Southern attack on Fort Sumter and the complicity in which Lincoln manoeuvred Davis into that position leads to a very compelling argument that Rome did the same.

At this time Hannibal began a series of operations by which he dictated the course of the war until his recall to Africa by the Carthaginian senate. He planned to cut off Rome's supply and strength at the source by taking the war to Italy. Carthage's only course of action precluded using the enemy's own resources against him. His chances of reaching Italy must have seemed insignificant to Rome, land routes were lengthy and difficult through wild and unfriendly territory and the dominance of the Roman fleet protected the sea. Additionally Hannibal had learned from the 1st Roman War that outside of Italy the Romans proved nearly irresistible.

Rome felt with their superiority at sea, they could choose the field of battle, embarking with one army to Spain and another to Sicily. Rome had at least two hundred

¹⁸¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.17.5-6.

and twenty quinqueremes in commission in 218 B.C.,¹⁸² of which sixty accompanied Consul P. Cornelius Scipio as far as the mouth of the Rhône then embarked on to Spain with his brother. The remaining one hundred and sixty went straight to Sicily under the command of the second consul, Ti. Sempronius Longus.

In contrast Carthage had fifty quinqueremes based in Spain. However, eighteen of these were unmanned.¹⁸³ Livy states twenty more ships were sent to raid Italy,¹⁸⁴ while thirty-five were sent on to western Sicily.¹⁸⁵ There is also evidence Carthage probably had more ships operating in the waters off Sicily in 218, since Polybius indicates Carthage sent an additional seventy ships to Sardinia in 217.¹⁸⁶ These figures indicate that Carthage had between fifty and one hundred fewer warships than Rome in 218 B.C. Livy points out that Rome knew of their decisive naval superiority,¹⁸⁷ and considering Hannibal's dispositions to protect Spain and Africa, he must have known it as well.

The omission of a strong navy where Carthage had until then considered essential, may be the reason Roman historians have thought Carthage deliberately withheld support from Hannibal. However, Hannibal decidedly renounced naval warfare by virtue of the very principles of his strategy. He dared not risk his invasion fleet being intercepted at sea; therefore, the Carthaginian navy did not enter into his immediate strategic plans. He felt Rome, a land-based power, could only be conquered on land, but this assumption was only valid where a victory could be obtained rapidly. Coupled with his perception that he

¹⁸² Polybius, The Histories, 3.41.2.

¹⁸³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.33.4.

¹⁸⁴ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.49.2.

¹⁸⁵ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.49.4.

¹⁸⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.96.8.

¹⁸⁷ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.17.8 & 21.22.4.

would find allies among the Celts in northern Italy upon his arrival, Hannibal's decision to invade Italy by land can be seen as based on sound strategic thinking, while his preparations bear all the hallmarks of careful planning.

Hannibal took sole responsibility for attacking Saguntum – the catalyst for the war – a decision, which the Carthaginian senate approved by accepting its consequences. Margaret Thatcher correctly stated, “Consensus is the absence of leadership.”¹⁸⁸ A decision made by taking a vote alone or making a compromise until consent is achieved lacks true leadership. Although the senate's approval may have had a critical bearing on Hannibal's thinking, he bore the ultimate responsibility for the outcome. Even if the Carthaginian senate preferred to fight a defensive war in Spain or to back down and not fight at all, Hannibal, due to his family's conquests, knew successful wars needed to be fought offensively and the time was right to begin the endeavour. Carthage only saw the political and economic situation while as commander Hannibal witnessed the big picture on the front lines of the conflict. Still, it was Hannibal, with the backing of common people, who brought the war to Rome. Further proof of Hannibal's lead and Carthaginian acceptance is seen when Hannibal concludes the alliance with Philip V of Macedonia in 216 B.C.

Yet, what would have been the outcome for Carthage if Hannibal had never lived? Without Hannibal Carthage would have controlled only a portion of southern Spain, Saguntum would never have been an issue, and all conflicts with Rome would have been fought defensively in Spain, almost certainly followed later in Africa. Rome would have taken Corsica then Spain. When Rome attacked Macedonia, Carthage most likely would have sided with Philip V and the catalyst would have opened for Rome to attack Carthage

¹⁸⁸ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee: Leadership Lessons for the Outgunned, Outnumbered, and Underfinanced (Paramus, NJ, 2000), page 67.

on its homeland. The consequences would have been similar, but the outcome worse for Carthage. With the battles fought on the African homeland, instead of in Italy, the devastation to Carthage doubtless would have been much greater. Most of all there would have been no Hannibal to pull the people together after the defeat at Cannae, no reforms to the government, and perhaps, an earlier destruction of Carthage.

Chapter II

Now that we have considered the cultural environment and conditions surrounding Hannibal's youth, it is possible to see how, and where, he intended to focus his attention. At first he set his sights on the continued conquests in Spain and the further consolidation of Carthaginian control on the peninsula. Due to the agreement made between Hasdrubal and Rome, Hannibal was very careful to extend that authority no farther than the Ebro river in the northern part of Spain. He planned once all of Spain had been subjugated to Carthaginian control – or at least those parts that could benefit the Carthaginian people – to set his sights on righting the wrongs imposed on his family and his city by Rome.

Once thought-out, an important observation becomes obvious: Hannibal did not cause the second war with Rome. But for the most part Rome did so by the imposition of unfair additional terms upon Carthage at a time when she could do nothing to prevent them. Because of this Hannibal's personal animosity towards Rome did increase the desire of the Carthaginian people to act against growing Roman power in the Western Mediterranean. However, the evidence suggests that he did not allow his personal emotions to outweigh the rational decision to attack Rome.

First, understanding that Saguntum was a "friend" of Rome, if not an actual ally, could be used to his advantage. The Ebro treaty specifies that the Carthaginians may not travel farther north than the Ebro river "under arms,"¹⁸⁹ but makes no such statement about the Romans going farther south. The assumption that such a restriction was placed on both Carthage and Rome has been the popular view taken by historians and is in fact

¹⁸⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 2.13.7.

"...τον δε καλουμενον Ιβηρα ποταμον ουκ εδει Καρχηδονιους επι πολεμω διαβαινειν,..." & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 168-172.

in error.¹⁹⁰ Although it is true that the Carthaginians may have seen the Ebro treaty in the same light as historians, the term, to them, may have been implied not specified. When the Romans used the Saguntines as a tripwire for further military advances by Carthage, it could have been seen as a possible slight to them and to Hannibal personally, as it was his family who had command and near autonomous control over the Iberian Peninsula.

To rectify the situation and to take advantage of an unforeseen situation, that of both Rome's consuls being sent on campaign in Illyria, Hannibal attacked Saguntum knowing the Romans could offer no effectual assistance. He also knew attacking the city would oblige Rome to help their "friend" or leave them to the fate of being conquered by Carthage. If they provided no help, Rome could expect its international standing to honour friendships to be viewed in the same light as the Native Americans eventually saw treaties made by the United States government – they were worth only the paper they were written upon.

Thus, the Roman embassy's choice to the Carthaginian senate was not a choice at all: surrender Hannibal or face war. The Carthaginian people chose war. Now that the war was official, Hannibal set in motion his plans and strategy to gain control of Rome. First and foremost he knew that the war must be taken to Rome's doorstep in Italy if it had any chance of being won. The end result was a brilliant strategy to attack the Roman Alliance, by land, in a lightening quick strike therefore subjecting the Romans to military defeats the like of which they had never seen in order to break up the Alliance and force Rome to submit to the will of Carthage.

This chapter looks into the causes of the War and then into Hannibal's strategy. All of the details which Hannibal would have needed to undertake and understand before

¹⁹⁰ J. Rich, "The Origins of the Second Punic War", pages 20-21.

setting out on such an outlandish plan will be discussed, particularly the Roman Alliance System, which he intended to break up and eventually failed to accomplish.

The Causes for the 2nd Roman War

Although most historians credit Hannibal's attack and capture of the Iberian port-city of Saguntum in 219 B.C. as the immediate cause for Carthage's second war with Rome, it merely marked the formal outbreak of hostilities between Carthage and Rome. By using accounts of the South's attack on Fort Sumter on the 12th of April, 1861 we can understand how Saguntum actually symbolizes the commencement rather than the reason for the conflict. After a brief, thirty-four hour bombardment, where not a single human life was lost during the fighting, the small Union garrison surrendered a position of questionable military value to either side. However, it is Fort Sumter's association with the War Between the States first and foremost, as does Saguntum with the 2nd Roman War, which gives both their symbolic dimension and far outweighs either's military significance. Even though the attack on the fort was the first notable clash of arms between the newly formed Confederacy and the Union, the battle served as a catalyst just as Saguntum did and marked a transition from the period of precarious peace that accompanied the initial secession of seven Deep South states from the Union to the four protracted years of bloodshed and devastation. Seen in this context it is easy to extrapolate the ensuing development between Carthage and Rome after Saguntum.

Rome's behaviour towards Carthage in the years following the peace settlement of the 1st Roman War sowed the seeds of hate and fanned the flames for revenge. Although Roman demands to end hostilities in 241 B.C. included the loss of Sicily and an enormous indemnity of 1,000 talents at once and an additional 2,200 talents over ten

years,¹⁹¹ Rome's actions in the three years following the end of the 1st Roman War prompted the Barcas' undying enmity.

Apparently, Rome looked at the strategic value of Sardinia as a threat to her deep-water shipping lanes and added a clause to the existing treaty with Carthage, requiring the Carthaginians to evacuate Sardinia and pay Rome additional reparations in the amount of 1,200 talents of silver,¹⁹² in what I perceive as an effort to further cripple Carthage's ability to recover economically. To show this we need to take a look at the consequences when the United States Congress passed a stiff protective tariff law in 1828 to levy duty on all imported manufactured goods. As long as the Southern states enjoyed free trade with Europe, unhampered by tariffs and duties, the fledgling industrial economy of the Northern states suffered. The contention being that if tariffs made it too costly for Southerners to purchase European goods, they would be forced to deal with the industrial complex of the Northern states, causing a situation where Europe would buy less of the South's raw materials, and in turn crippling the Southern economy.

When Rome seized Sardinia from Carthage, technically breaking the peace treaty of 241 that ended the 1st Roman War, Carthage tried to reoccupy the island, resulting in an ultimatum by Rome. Because of the Carthaginians weakened state, Rome immediately followed with a new addition to the treaty, possession of Corsica. Polybius understood the Carthaginians had no options and were forced to agree "contrary to all justice, and merely because the occasion permitted it, were forced to evacuate Sardinia and pay the additional

¹⁹¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.27.1-6.

¹⁹² W. V. Harris, War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327-70 B.C. (Oxford, 1979), page 191 & 201.

sum.”¹⁹³ He asserts that Rome had shown its hostile intent with the seizure of Sardinia and the harsh tribute terms placed on Carthage, for which “it is impossible to discover any reasonable pretext or cause.”¹⁹⁴ But it is clear that Polybius thought the causes of the second war most likely rested with Rome in stating the following:

“Therefore, if we take the destruction of Saguntum to be the cause of the war we must allow that the Carthaginians were in the wrong in beginning the war, both in view of the treaty of Lutatius, in which it was stipulated that the allies of each should be secure from attack by the other, and in view of the convention made with Hasdrubal, by which the Carthaginians undertook not to cross the Ebro in arms. If, however, we take the cause of the war to have been the robbery of Sardinia and the tribute then exacted, we must certainly confess that they had good reason for entering on the Hannibalic war, since having yielded only to circumstances, they now availed themselves of circumstances to be avenged on those who had injured them.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.28.2.

“...ηναγκασμενους παρα παντα τα δικαγια δια τον καιρον εκχωρησαι μεν Σαρδονος, εξενεγκειν δε το προειορημενον πληθος...” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 356.

¹⁹⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.28.1. “...ουτε προφασιν ουτ’ αιτιαν ευροι τις αν ευλογον,...” & W.V. Harris, War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327-70 B.C., page 192.

¹⁹⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.30.3-4.

“διοπερ ει μεν τις την Ζακανθης απωλειαν αιτιαν τιθησι του πολεμου, συγχωρητεον αδικως εξενηνοχεναι τον πολεμον Καρχηδονιους κατα τε τας επι του Λυτατιου συνθηκας, καθ’ ας εδει τοις εκατερων συμμαχιος την υφ’ εκατερων υπαρχειν ασφαλειαν, κατα τε τας επ’ Ασδρουβου, καθ’ ας ουκ εδει διαβαινειν τον Ίβηρα ποταμον επι πολεμω Καρχηδονιους· ει δε την Σαρδονος αφαιρεσιν και τα συν ταυτη χρηματα, παντως ομολογητεον ευλογως πεπολεμηκεναι τον κατ’ Ἀννιβαν πολεμον τους Καρχηδονιους· καιρω γαρ πεισθεντες ημυνοντο συν καιρω τους

The second item in the preceding passage is especially interesting in view of the fact that it confirms Sardinia along with the annexation of Corsica to be the primary cause of the second war with Rome. Rather than accept the idea of Carthaginian hostility at Saguntum, Sicily along with Sardinia and Corsica turned out to be the very foundation for Rome's overseas empire.¹⁹⁶ The Romans persisted in their need to control these strategic land bases because merchant vessels escorted by warships needed to be able to beach or enter a harbour at short intervals. Control of beaches and harbours along an intended route allowed uninterrupted and unmolested movement of the fleet. The addition of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica created Roman domination over the beaches and harbours from Spain to Italy and Africa to Italy. Rome now controlled the strongest naval fleet in the Mediterranean area and her shipping lanes were unopposed. These overseas territories had served Carthage's commercial interests, allowing them to control the terms under which they and other traders operated. The loss would have been a grievous blow to their economy as well as their pride. The Carthaginian people now collectively shared Hamilcar's anger and determination, which reflects as Polybius insists that the Barcas and the Carthaginian community were in agreement in their attitude towards Rome and the renewal of the war.¹⁹⁷

βλαψαντας.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 358. See also, J. Rich, “The Origins of the Second Punic War”, page 8.

¹⁹⁶ N. Bagnall, The Punic Wars, pages 123-125.

¹⁹⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.32.7 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 360-361.

The Ebro Treaty and Sardinia vs. Saguntum¹⁹⁸

As discussed in chapter one the Carthaginians selected Hamilcar Barca to bring Carthage back to its previously status in the Mediterranean. We are told he proceeded to conquer a substantial empire in the valley of the Baetis (Guadalquivir) and along the coast east from Gades. Cassius Dio notes the Roman Senate sent an embassy to Hamilcar to “*ἐπι κατασκοπεῖ*” in 231 B.C., though they apparently decided no direct action needed to be taken.¹⁹⁹ But even the embassy determined Hamilcar’s activities were not fraudulent, the fact that Rome sent a delegation at all is clear argument that they were concerned by Carthage’s expansionist activities as early as 231.

With the death of Hamilcar, Hasdrubal the Fair continued to consolidate Carthaginian interests upon taking command. Although Rome remained indifferent to the increasing military strength under Hasdrubal, the city of Massilia became highly suspicious of Carthaginian expansion due to its own economic interests in Spain.²⁰⁰ As an

¹⁹⁸ For a similar view on the following, see J.S. Richardson, The Romans in Spain (Oxford, 1996), pages 16-24. For further details on the Ebro treaty, see J.S. Richardson, Hispaniae, pages 20-28. For a view of the causes from a distinctly Roman point of view, see J. Briscoe, “The Second Punic War”, The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VIII Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C., 2nd Edition, A.E. Austin, et al. eds. (Cambridge, 1989), pages 44-47.

¹⁹⁹ Cassius Dio, Roman History, Vol. II, trans. E. Cary, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1914), Book 7, Frag. 48. “spy out”; N.J.E. Austin and N.B. Rankov, Exploratio: Military and Political Intelligence in the Roman World from the Second Punic War to the Battle of Adrianople (London, 1995), page 91 & J. Rich, “The Origins of the Second Punic War”, page 2.

²⁰⁰ Massilia very likely prompted both the 231 and 226 embassies; Massilia was the greatest trading city of the northwestern Mediterranean and regarded as one of the best informed. See Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 27.36.1-2.

ally of Rome Massilia made such intelligence available to Rome,²⁰¹ and it was probably in response to their warnings that Rome intervened in 226 to limit his advance northward. The subsequent treaty implies the Gallic invasion of Italy was imminent when the treaty was concluded and that invasion took place in 225, so the treaty was probably concluded in 226 or early 225.²⁰²

The only provision of the treaty mentioned by Polybius is that the Carthaginians were not to cross the Ebro for war, and in his first reference he states, "...in which no mention was made of the rest of Spain."²⁰³ If the primary function of the Ebro river in the treaty between Rome and Carthage was to act as a line cutting across the peninsula, then it was merely an attempt by the Roman Senate to separate the Carthaginians from the Gauls. There is no reason to believe the treaty described by Polybius was anything other than a limitation on the movement of the Carthaginian army; and, Rome's intention of keeping Carthage separated from Gaul proved to be correct tactic.²⁰⁴

The implications of the treaty neither claimed the area north of the Ebro as belonging to Rome, nor control of the territory south of the river to Carthage. Nevertheless, Polybius is explicit in his assessment that the only provision relating to Spain was the prohibition on the Carthaginians crossing the Ebro for war; they were not restricted from crossing the Ebro for commerce and nothing was said about their position

²⁰¹ Later, the Massaliots confirmed Hannibal had crossed the Pyrenees and was raising troops in Gaul. See Polybius, The Histories, 3.15,1-2.

²⁰² Polybius, The Histories, 2.13 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 167-172.

²⁰³ Polybius, The Histories, 2.13.7. "εν αις την μεν αλλην 'Ιβηριαν παρεσιωτων"; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 168-172 & J.S. Richardson, Hispaniae, pages 25-26.

²⁰⁴ Polybius attributes the co-operation of the Gauls with Hannibal reaching Italy and conducting the war there. See Polybius, The Histories, 3.34.4-5.

in Spain south of the Ebro. Further, no restriction was placed on the Romans in respect to Spain. Other later sources give us the impression that the treaty in which the ban on crossing the Ebro applied to both sides, but these versions also include a guarantee for Saguntum, which is clearly inaccurate.²⁰⁵ A provision prohibiting one party from crossing a specific line was a common feature in Roman treaties. For example, the Romans had accepted such restrictions themselves in their first two treaties with Carthage and they imposed them on the other party in their peace treaties with the Illyrians in 228.²⁰⁶

Hasdrubal may have thought it would do no harm to agree to the terms of the treaty since the choice of the Ebro only makes sense in terms of the interests of Massilia and would have protected Massilia's two colonies in Spain north of the Ebro, Emporion and Rhode, from Carthaginian attack.²⁰⁷ However, the Romans would never have agreed to terms of a treaty that did not benefit their interests by restricting the Carthaginian military's advance in Spain. Virtually all scholars believe the Romans exacted the restriction that the Carthaginians would not cross the Ebro under arms because they were afraid Hasdrubal might combine with the Gauls in their imminent invasion. Thus, the treaty shows Roman distrust of the Barcid family's expansion in Spain, rather than the establishment of a Roman presence south of the Pyrenees. Polybius was right about what prompted the Romans to conclude the treaty: concern about the growth of Carthaginian power. As his account suggests, the foundation of Carthago Nova with its potential as

²⁰⁵ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.2.7;18.9; Appian, Roman History: The Wars in Spain, trans. H. White, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1912), 7.11 & J. Rich, "The Origins of the Second Punic War", page 2.

²⁰⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 2.12.3 & 3.22.4-7 and F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius. Vol. I, pages 165 & 341-343.

²⁰⁷ J.S. Richardson, Hispaniae, page 27.

both a military and naval base may have been the catalyst for the treaty. And although the treaty did not prevent the Carthaginians from consolidating their power south of the Ebro, it did prevent them from expanding north to the Pyrenees where either on their own or in concert with the Gauls they might constitute a direct threat to Rome.²⁰⁸

If Carthage had no plans to expand beyond the Ebro, then Carthaginian interests were not affected by the treaty; however, Rome by forming a link with an Iberian community south of the Ebro indicates an altogether different matter. Polybius tells us the people of Saguntum had positioned themselves as a “friend” of the Roman people by 226. Though it is possible since Saguntum was an ally of Massilia who indeed was a “friend” of Rome, the “friendship” with Saguntum may have been implied by way of Massilia rather than a factual friendship between the two cities of Saguntum and Rome. If they established the association as early as 226 it might explain the Carthaginian acquiescence as long as Rome did not use the relationship to further interfere in Spain. Nevertheless it is clear the opportunity proved too tempting for Rome to resist. Through their friendship with the Saguntines, the Romans used Saguntum as a forward position to watch over Carthaginian expansion in southern and eastern Spain. The connection with Saguntum did not involve a breach of the Ebro treaty, however, it did escalate the tension between Rome and Carthage. It seems the Saguntines sent several warnings about Carthage to Rome without actively eliciting a response until Hannibal succeeded command in Spain.²⁰⁹

After the assassination of Hasdrubal in 221 B.C., the Carthaginian senate quickly confirmed Hannibal as his successor, and the next generation of the Barca family

²⁰⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 18.4.2 & 50.8-9.

²⁰⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.15.1-2 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 319-320.

continued the path towards war with Rome. “From the day on which he was proclaimed commander-in-chief,” Livy alleges “as though Italy had been assigned to him for his field of operations and he had been instructed to make war on Rome...[Hannibal] resolved upon attacking the Saguntines.”²¹⁰ Although this statement is clearly open to question, it is evident he did in fact immediately set out to extend Carthaginian influence in Spain by bringing the neighbouring tribes under his control, and in doing so he rapidly advanced north towards the Ebro. As previously noted Hannibal could not help but be influenced by the wrath (*θυμος*) felt by his father against Rome; consequently, his determination to renew the conflict when a suitable opportunity arose is beyond speculation.²¹¹

In 220 B.C. he initiated a series of attacks on the Vaccaeii – inhabitants of the middle stretch of the Duero. After capturing Sadmautica and Arbucale, he was attacked on his return to Carthago Nova by the Carpetani, who occupied the very center of Spain around Toletum on the Tagus. After withdrawing across the Tagus he slaughtered the Carpetani using forty elephants along with his cavalry. He appears to have crossed the Sierra Morena by both the Valdapenas Pass and the Penarray Pass. With his victory against the Carpetani, except for Saguntum and the territory held by the Celtiberians on the upper portion of the Douro and Tagus, Spain belonged to the Carthaginians up to the Ebro.

²¹⁰ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.5.1. “Ceterum ex quo die dux est declaratus, velut Italia ei provincia decreta bellumque Romanum mandatum esset, ... Saguntinis inferre bellum statuit.” The term *provincia* is used by Livy in the Roman context of a sphere of command. See also, K. Lomas, Roman Italy 338 B.C.-AD 200: A Sourcebook (London, 1996), page 22.

²¹¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.9.6 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 312-313.

Saguntum was of extreme strategic importance to Hannibal's growing power, for he could not ignore the hostile Saguntines if he intended to advance past Saguntum up the narrow coastal plain to the Ebro.²¹² This approach offered Rome the chance to restrict Carthage's expansion by imposing a limit on their coastal advance at Saguntum, nearly 150 km south of the Ebro. And according to Polybius, Hannibal regarded Saguntum in this light; and because of this, carefully avoided any interference with the city while he expanded his control of the central areas of Spain south of the Ebro.²¹³ By contrast in strictly military terms, Fort Sumter scarcely merits attention; however, in psychological terms the value of the fort proved to be the culmination of the North's attempt to collect import tariffs on the state of South Carolina. Having declared their state and independent republic, the South Carolinians resented the presence of a foreign flag in their harbour and looked upon Major Robert Anderson's December 26, 1860 move to Fort Sumter from Fort Moultrie as an act of aggression.²¹⁴ Surely the only city South of the Ebro in Roman hands would have not only been resented by Hannibal but seen as Roman encroachment on Carthaginian territory.

In the winter of 220/219 a serious dispute broke out in the city of Saguntum between a faction favouring support from Rome and another preferring Carthage. The pro-Roman group called upon the Roman Senate to arbitrate the dispute and dispatched a delegation to Italy with warnings of Hannibal's threat to the security of the area. When

²¹² J. Rich, "The Origins of the Second Punic War", pages 27-28. For a counter argument to the importance of Saguntum for the Carthaginians, see W.V. Harris, War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327-70 B.C., pages 200-205.

²¹³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.15.9-10 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 323.

²¹⁴ R.N. Current, The Confederacy (New York, 1993), page 224; W. & B. Catton, Two Roads to Sumter (New York, 1963), page 278.

Rome responded to their pleas by sending a group of Roman ambassadors to mediate, a number of pro-Carthaginian citizens were executed. When the Confederate government established early on a policy with regard to the two principal forts remaining under Federal control in the seceded states, the retention of these forts became a test of credibility to the defenders of the Union, while their acquisition became essential for the Confederacy to claim the full rights of a sovereign nation.²¹⁵ On February 15, 1861, the Provisional Congress in Montgomery resolved, "Immediate steps should be taken to obtain possession of Forts Sumter and Pickens...either by negotiations or force."²¹⁶ For that reason, President Jefferson Davis sent three peace commissioners to Washington D.C. to negotiate with the Lincoln administration. While the month of March dragged on Justice Campbell reported to the Confederate peace delegation that Secretary Seward had assured him of the president's intention to evacuate the fort, but the delegates noticed an increased military buildup in Washington.²¹⁷

In the same manner, a Roman delegation, possibly the same ambassadors sent to Saguntum, arrived in Carthago Nova with demands that Hannibal forego intervention into the internal affairs of Saguntum and abide by the treaty of 226. Hannibal indignantly asserted that pro-Carthaginian citizens had been killed, obliging him to uphold the justice of their cause. He lectured the ambassadors on the Carthaginian tradition of taking up the causes of victims of injustice, stating he would continue to honour that tradition in Spain,²¹⁸ and followed that Saguntum would not be protected by their friendship with

²¹⁵ R.N. Current, The Confederacy, page 524.

²¹⁶ R.N. Current, The Confederacy, pages 224-225.

²¹⁷ M.A. Grissom, Southern by the Grace of God, pages 102-103.

²¹⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 3.15.7 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 322.

Rome as long as they continued to persecute those under the protection of Carthage. While both the North and South waited for a resolution of their standoff, President Lincoln sent a political ally to Charleston to determine the attitude of the people. Not surprisingly he found the Charlestonians solidly opposed to the Federal government and that they would look upon any effort to send military provisions to Union troops at Fort Sumter as an act of war. Because of this, historical evidence points to the conclusion that it was Lincoln's intention for the war to start at Fort Sumter, and we can postulate it was Rome's aim for the war with Carthage to begin at Saguntum.²¹⁹

After hearing Rome's ultimatum in the winter of 220/219, Hannibal sent for instructions from the Carthaginian senate. Polybius criticizes Hannibal's request to Carthage for instructions in dealing with Rome on the grounds that the Saguntines were attacking Carthaginian subjects,²²⁰ which took little into account of the practicalities of the situation:

“Being wholly under the influence of unreasoning and violent anger, he did not allege the true reasons, but took refuge in groundless pretexts, as men are wont to do who disregard duty because they are prepossessed by passion. How much better would it have been for him to demand from the Romans the restitution of Sardinia, and at the same time of the tribute which they had so unjustly exacted, availing themselves of the misfortunes of Carthage, and to threaten war in the event of refusal! But as it was, by keeping silent as to the real cause and by inventing a non-existing one about Saguntum, he gave the idea that he was

²¹⁹ M.A. Grissom, Southern by the Grace of God, page 103.

²²⁰ As Harris states, “Rome may in fact have encouraged the Saguntines to behave aggressively.” W.V. Harris, War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327-70 B.C., page 202. See also, N. Bagnall, The Punic Wars, page 151; T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, pages 33-34 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 25.

entering on the war not only unsupported by reason but without justice on his side.”²²¹

Whether fact or not, theoretically the Roman delegation left Carthago Nova convinced Hannibal could not be reasoned with and war an inevitable outcome. In their subsequent report to the Senate, the Roman ambassadors described Hannibal as obsessed by his hatred for all Romans and they found him to be in a state “full of martial ardour”.²²² Hannibal’s perverseness must have been comparable to Davis when Lincoln rebuffed the Confederate peace negotiations by announcing that twelve vessels with a force of 285 guns and 2,400 men had sailed for Fort Sumter.²²³ Davis received word from President Lincoln that “provisions would be sent to Sumter peaceably, otherwise by force.”²²⁴ In much the same way the Roman envoy presented the Carthaginian Senate an equally unacceptable alternative: Hannibal and his staff were to be sent to Rome for trial

²²¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.15.9-11.

“καθολου δ’ ην πληρης αλογιας και θυμου βιαιον· διο και ταις μεν αληθιναις αιτιαις ουκ εχρητο, κατεφευγε δ’ εις προφασεις αλογους· απερ ειωθασι ποιειν οι δια τας προεγκαθημενας αυτοις ορμας ολιγωρουντες του καθηκοντος. ποσω γαρ ην αμεινον οιεσθαι δειν ’Ρωμαιοις αποδουναι σφισι Σαρδονα και τους επιταχθεντας αμα ταυτη φορους, ους τοις καιροις συνεπιθεμενοι προτερον αδικως παρ’ αυτων ελαβον· ε’ δε μη, φαναι πολεμησειν; νυν δε την μεν ουσαν αιτιαν αληθινην παρασιωπων, την δ’ ουχ υπαρχουσαν περι Ζακανθαιων πλαττων, ου μονον αλογως, επι δε μαλλον αδικως καταρχειν εδοκει του πολεμου.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 323.

²²² Polybius, The Histories, 3.15.6. “ο δ’ ’Αννιβας, ατε νεος μεν ων, πληρης δε πολεμικης ορμης,...” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 321-322. See J. Rich, “The Origins of the Second Punic War”, page 5 for an argument against the Roman delegation even being sent to Hannibal.

²²³ M.A. Grissom, Southern by the Grace of God, page 104.

²²⁴ R.N. Current, The Confederacy, page 224.

thereby accepting that Hannibal had attacked Saguntum of his own volition.²²⁵ If Carthage disowned Hannibal, they would not declare war.²²⁶ In the subsequent quote Livy sets the stage for a dramatic scene between the Roman ambassador and the Carthaginian senate, creatively confirming the time for diplomacy had passed:

“Then the Roman, gathering up his toga into a fold, said ‘We bring you here both war and peace; choose which you will!’ When he had said these words, they cried out with no less truculence that he might give them whichever he liked; and on his shaking out the fold again, and announcing that he gave them war, they all replied that they accepted it, and in that same spirit in which they accepted it were resolved to wage it.”²²⁷

There were two opinions on the question of war within the Carthaginian senate. Hanno led a minority faction representing the oligarchy Livy speaks of. “A few, and these included nearly all the best men, supported Hanno,”²²⁸ who opposed the war as they had opposed Hamilcar’s expansionist policies in Spain. He proposed a compromise where Hannibal would be removed from command and banished, further admonishing the senate that Hamilcar Barca possessed the son and so long as one Barca lived there would be no peace with Rome; and in fact, at that very moment Hannibal was leading them toward

²²⁵ See G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 108-114 and T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 157-162 for a synopsis of the siege of Saguntum.

²²⁶ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.10.

²²⁷ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.18.13-14. “Tum Romanus sinu ex toga facto ‘Hic’ inquit ‘vobis bellum et pacem portamus: utrum placet sumite!’ Sub hanc vocem haud minus ferociter, daret utrum vellet. succlamatum est; et cum is iterum sinu effuso bellum dare dixisset, accipere se omnes responderunt et quibus acciperent animis iisdem se gesturos.”

²²⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.4.1. “Pauci ac ferme optimus quisque hannoni adsentiebantur;...”

war.²²⁹ He further admonished, “Your armies now invest Saguntum, which the treaty forbids them to approach...”²³⁰ But this supposed provision in the treaty as we have discussed is fictional and more than likely helped Livy’s allegation of considerable opposition to Hannibal in Carthage.

The opposing faction, a more populist-majority party, supported Hannibal’s antagonism towards Rome largely due to what the Barcas had accomplished in Spain and gave their verbal support to deal with the problem as he saw fit. In a later diplomatic exchange – the final one – an unnamed Carthaginian senator refers to earlier Roman violations, furiously concludes, “Cease then to prate of Saguntum and the Ebro, and bring forth at last the thought with which your mind has long been in travail!”²³¹ In Montgomery President Davis and his cabinet met to decide on a course of action prior to the arrival of the armed Union fleet at Charleston. Their dilemma was twofold: if the Confederates demanded surrender and had to take the fort by force, history would record that the South started the war; if they took no action until the massive fleet strengthened the fort, an extensive battle would ensue. Weighing the matter heavily, President Davis opted for the plan to avoid the most bloodshed – he ordered General Beauregard to take the fort as quickly as possible. Davis did not wait for the arrival of Lincoln’s expedition but, instead, risked the burden of firing the first shot. Once we scrutinize the situation objectively no choice was left for the Confederacy or for Carthage.

Polybius reproduces what he calls the Roman reply to the arguments, which the Carthaginians had presented to the embassy, “a reply indeed which they did not make at

²²⁹ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.10.

²³⁰ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.10.5. “Saguntum vestri circumsedent exercitus, unde arcentur foedere;...”

²³¹ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.18.12. “Proinde omittite Sagunti atque Hiberi mentionem facere et quod diu parturit animus vester aliquando pariat!”

the time owing to their indignation at the loss of Saguntum, but it has been given on many occasions and by many different people at Rome.”²³² Erroneously this statement maintains that the Carthaginians were bound by the Lutatius Treaty that extended protection to Saguntum as a friend of Rome.²³³ Yet, upon closer examination we can be consider that Polybius in truth viewed the causes to be in the immediate aftermath of the 1st Roman War and it was the Romans who had wronged Carthage over Sardinia and Corsica, causing the Carthaginians quite properly to retaliate when circumstances permitted.²³⁴ When scholars investigate the Confederate government’s accountability at Fort Sumter, it is Lincoln’s decisions and motives that have been most closely scrutinized for it is obvious that Lincoln was not committed to a peaceable resolution of the crisis. If the President truly sought the most peaceable course possible, he would have let Fort Sumter go. Since Fort Sumter had no military value, Lincoln could have justified his withdrawal on the grounds of military necessity, blaming the previous Buchanan administration for handing him the fort in an indefensible condition. Even in sending the Sumter expedition, Lincoln could have announced his purpose without also stating that he would attempt to reinforce the fort if the provisioning were resisted. When compelled to

²³² Polybius, The Histories, 3.29.1.

“τα δ’ υπο Ῥωμαίων λεγόμενα νυν ερούμεν· οἱς τότε μὲν οὐκ ἐχρησάντο δια τὸν ἐπὶ τῇ Ζακάνθαιων ἀπώλεια θυμὸν· λέγεται δὲ πολλάκις καὶ υπο πολλῶν παρ’ αὐτοῖς.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 356. See J. Rich, “The Origins of the Second Punic War”, page 19 and especially N.J.E. Austin and N.B. Rankov, Exploratio, page 91 for further evidence that the Romans did not usually offer military assistance to cities requesting immediate aid.

²³³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.30.

²³⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.29.1. Polybius had to be careful how he worded his assertion as his patron was a Scipio and his audience was the Roman people.

fight, Americans claim the high moral ground of defending against aggressors.²³⁵ The possibility that either the Lincoln or Davis administrations initiated the war challenges long-established and strongly held cultural assumptions; therefore, it was necessary for Lincoln's actions to deliberately fix the onus for starting the war on the Confederacy.

If it was recognized that the war with Rome was merely a response to their seizure of Sardinia, it could be seen that the Carthaginians were in the right.²³⁶ However, Hannibal had only himself to blame for the fact that Carthage had come to be regarded as in the wrong for he himself had rested his case on Saguntum and on that issue Rome had the moral advantage since Rome's actions were essentially defensive, in the sense that they were prompted by the wish to curb Carthaginian expansion just as Lincoln acknowledged the possibility that his policy at Fort Sumter risked conflict. Lincoln developed a "strategy of defense", by which he would hold federal property by means that would be considered defensive, not coercive. Thus, despite his cabinet's almost unanimous approval to withdraw from Sumter, Lincoln formulated the idea of sending in provisions and of providing advance notice to the South Carolina government.²³⁷

In the twentieth century, a critical view of Lincoln's actions gained a wide audience through the writings of Charles W. Ramsdell and others. According to Ramsdell, the situation at Sumter presented Lincoln with a series of dilemmas. If he took action to maintain the fort, he would lose the border South and a large segment of

²³⁵ A. de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Vol. II, trans. P. Bradley (London, 1945) originally published in 1835 & 1840, pages 264-270.

²³⁶ For the formality used by the Romans to take Sardinia, see W.V. Harris, War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327-70 B.C., pages 167-168. See also, B.H. Warmington, Carthage, pages 190-191.

²³⁷ K.W. Stamp, Imperiled Union (New York, 1980), pages 163-88 & R. Current, Lincoln and the First Shot (New York, 1963), pages 188-194.

northern opinion which wanted to conciliate the South. If he abandoned the fort, he jeopardized the Union by legitimizing the Confederacy. Lincoln also hazarded losing the support of a substantial portion of his own Republican party, and risked appearing a weak and ineffective leader. He could escape these predicaments only if he could induce southerners to attack Sumter, “to assume the aggressive and thus put themselves in the wrong in the eyes of the North and of the world.”²³⁸ By sending a relief expedition, ostensibly to provide food to a hungry garrison, Lincoln turned the tables on the Confederates, forcing them to choose whether to permit the fort to be strengthened, or to act as the aggressor. By this “astute strategy”, Lincoln manoeuvred the South into firing the first shot,²³⁹ just as the Romans pressed the Carthaginians into attacking Saguntum.²⁴⁰

If the Carthaginians had been content to accept the loss of their first overseas empire and remain primarily an African power as Hanno’s supporters wished, the course of events would, possibly, have been that Rome and Carthage would have co-existed for a few years longer. Carthage – or at least the faction of the Carthaginian senate who supported the Barcas – had not accepted the verdict of the 1st Roman War. With the loss of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, the new empire in Spain was to equip Carthage for the eventual renewal of the conflict. In submitting to Hannibal’s judgment, the senate was fully cognizant that they would choose to oppose Rome’s demands – indeed they could hardly do otherwise. They understood that for Carthage to acquiesce to Rome in this matter would provide them with a precedent to justify future interference in Spain, which

²³⁸ C.W. Ramsdell, “Lincoln and Fort Sumter”, Behind the Lines in the Southern Confederacy, W.H. Stephenson ed. (New Orleans, LA, 1998), page 286.

²³⁹ C.W. Ramsdell, “Lincoln and Fort Sumter”, pages 259-88.

²⁴⁰ Though it should be noted that the Romans probably did this without knowing the consequences as did Lincoln.

was as unacceptable to them as to Hannibal. The notion of an embittered and economically revived Carthage living in peace alongside a dynamic and expansionist Roman state was as unthinkable as the co-existence of an economically sound Confederacy living alongside the expansionism of the Union.

By exploring President Davis' position it is an easy leap to think Hannibal considered the Roman intervention a break of faith not to be ignored regardless of the treaty issues involved in the siege of Saguntum. President Davis took the position that the Confederate government had shown great "forbearance"²⁴¹ in trying to reach an equitable settlement with the Federal government; however, Lincoln destroyed these efforts by sending "a hostile fleet"²⁴² to Sumter. "The attempt to represent us as the aggressors," Davis argued, "is as unfounded as the complaint made by the wolf against the lamb in the familiar fable. He who makes the assault is not necessarily he that strikes the first blow or fires the first gun."²⁴³ If we take into account the Roman policy at this period of time was consistently designed to weaken powerful rivals, and once weakened to subject them to Roman rule,²⁴⁴ it is easy to understand why at Saguntum Hannibal decided 'now' not 'later' to be the time to fight Rome by taking the war to Italy. He was in the prime of manhood, a proven tactical leader, and had at his disposal a superb military machine. Further, the invasion had to be timed to prevent a Roman invasion of Africa. From Davis'

²⁴¹ J. Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, Vol. I (1990, New York) originally published in 1881, page 289.

²⁴² J. Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, Vol. I, page 290.

²⁴³ J. Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, Vol. I, page 290.

²⁴⁴ A strong case can be made for this statement, see I. Morris, "Forward", The Ancient Economy, M.I. Finley, Updated Edition (Berkeley, CA, 1999), page xxiii and M. Frederiksen, "Theory. Evidence and the Ancient Economy", *Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 65 (1975), pages 164-171. For a counter-argument, see W.V. Harris, War and Imperialism in Republican Rome 327-70 B.C., page 192.

point of view, to permit the strengthening of Fort Sumter, even if done in a peaceable manner, meant the continued presence of a hostile threat to Charleston and the rest of South Carolina. Further, although the ostensible purpose of the expedition was to re-supply, not reinforce the fort, the Confederacy had no guarantee that Lincoln would abide by his word. And even if he restricted his actions to re-supply in this case, what was to prevent him from attempting to reinforce the fort in the future? Therefore, the attack on Fort Sumter was a measure of “defense”.²⁴⁵ To acquiesce in the fort’s relief, even at the risk of firing the first shot, “would have been as unwise as it would be to hesitate to strike down the arm of the assailant, who levels a deadly weapon at one’s breast, until he has actually fired.”²⁴⁶

Polybius and Livy are inexact about dates; Livy left uncertain the year of the Saguntine campaign, whether 220 or 219, though he finally opts for 219.²⁴⁷ His reason for doing so is a fact on which he and Polybius agree, that the siege of Saguntum lasted about eight months.²⁴⁸ Accepting this duration as valid, Hannibal would not have assembled his army and moved against Saguntum in midwinter; therefore, the siege cannot have begun before the spring of 219. It then dragged on until the end of the year, possibly into early 218. If the siege began in April, it lasted until about November; if it did not begin until July, it must have lasted into January. After the city fell, he led his army back to winter quarters in Carthago Nova, consistent with this estimated dating. He

²⁴⁵ W. & B. Catton, Two Roads to Sumter, page 278.

²⁴⁶ J. Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, Vol. I, pages 289-295.

²⁴⁷ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.5; amended in 21.15.

²⁴⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 2.3-15.2, 21.7.4-9, & 21.15; Polybius, The Histories, 3.17 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 327-328.

almost immediately dismissed the Spanish troops to home leave.²⁴⁹ And, Livy, in a speech given by Hannibal to his troops, creates a depiction of the upcoming long campaign:

“ ‘My allies, I doubt not that you yourselves perceive how, having conquered every tribe in Spain, we must either bring our campaigning to a close and disband our armies, or shift the seat of war to other countries. For these nations here will enjoy the blessings not merely of peace, but also of victory, only if we look to other nations for spoils and glory. Since, therefore, you are on the eve of an expedition that will carry you far afield and it is uncertain when you will see again your homes and what there is dear to each of you, if any of you desires to visit his friends, I grant him furlough. Be at hand, I charge you, with the first signs of spring, that with Heaven’s good help we may begin a war that shall bring us vast renown and booty.’ ”²⁵⁰

Hannibal divided the treasures of Saguntum between his soldiers and sent a large portion, along with a contingent of defeated citizens as slaves back to Carthage. When the senate saw the wealth from the plunder of Saguntum they were disposed in favour of

²⁴⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.35.1 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 366.

²⁵⁰ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.21.3-6. “‘Credo ego vos,’ inquit ‘socii, et ipsos cernere pacatis omnibus Hispaniae populis aut finiendam nobis militiam exercitusque dimittendos esse aut in alias terras transferendum bellum; ita enim hae gentes non pacis solum sed etiam victoriae bonis florebut, si ex aliis gentibus praedam et gloriam quaeremus. Itaque cum longinqua a domo instet militia incertum que sit quando domos vestras at quae cuique ibi cara sunt visuri sitis, si quis vestrum suos invisere volt, commeatum do. Primo vere edico adsitis, ut dis bene iuvantibus bellum ingentis gloriae praedaeque futurum incipiamus.’”

Hannibal, thus ensuring their support for his next step. As an astute political, Hannibal was intent on beginning the war with the full support of the Carthaginian senate.

As Hannibal marched from Carthago Nova to Saguntum, the Romans sent two consular armies to Illyria.²⁵¹ The Romans must have concluded the most immediate danger to their interests came from Illyria, rather than Hannibal in Spain. It may be that the Romans found themselves with no good options – unwilling to abrogate the alliance with Saguntum because of the implied concession to Hannibal, yet unable to reinforce it because of over-commitment in Illyria. From the Roman point of view, failure to support an ally in practice may have been a lesser even than formally abrogating the alliance. This position militates against larger objectives by Rome since one does not manufacture a pretext for war when unable to act on it.

Polybius, in his thumbnail sketch of the war in Illyria, indicates the Romans undertook the war partly as a preclusive measure to clear the decks for a war against Hannibal: “Consequently, the Senate...decided to secure their position in Illyria, as they foresaw that the war would be serious and long and the scene of it far away from home.”²⁵² If so, they seriously miscalculated the necessity to commit resources in this secondary action instead of securing their base against Hannibal. This is especially true in the lines immediately preceding those just quoted, where Polybius points out that the

²⁵¹ For details of the Illyrian expedition, see N. Bagnall, The Punic Wars, pages 135-141.

²⁵² Polybius, The Histories, 3.16.1.

“Διο και προς ταυτην αρμοζομενοι την υποθεσιν η συγκλητος εκρινεν ασφαλισασθαι τα κατα την 'Ιλλυριδα πραγματα, προορωμενη διοτι μεγας εσται και πολυχρονιος και μακραν απο της οικειας ο πολεμος.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 324-325.

Romans “supposed they would fight in Spain with Saguntum for a base.”²⁵³ While Roman resources were committed to Illyria, they lost that much needed base. If they intended to wage war against Hannibal in Spain, the Romans misjudged the situation very badly indeed.

The Illyrian coast offered a perfect sanctuary for pirates who used the Adriatic as their personal hunting ground. Although substantial numbers of Roman merchants had been killed or captured into slavery, these activities brought little attention to the Roman Senate until after the 1st Roman War when the complaints became too numerous to ignore. Perhaps more importantly, after the 1st Roman War the rapid expansion of territory by Illyria indicated a new and potentially hostile state that could become an ally of Macedonia. These two dangers were cited by the ancient sources as the principal reasons for the Romans to declare war against Illyria in 229 B.C. When Illyria sought peace with Rome in the spring of the following year, Queen Teuta lost all her southernmost possessions and a number of cities along Illyria’s northern coast. Rome restored the Greek general Demetrius to his hereditary domain at Pharos with his territory formed as a minor state under their protection. By having Demetrius monitor Illyria to the west, Rome maintained domination over the coast to the south and established Roman authority in the southern Adriatic, thereby erecting an obstacle to Macedonian expansion into the Adriatic and Ionian Seas.

Peace endured for ten years until Demetrius extended his borders, withdrew from Rome’s protection, and entered into a treaty with Antigonus, King of Macedon while Rome concentrated on a war with the Gauls. At the same time Rome sent a stern warning

²⁵³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.15.13.

“...αλλ’ εν Ἰβηρια, χρησεσθαι δε προς τον πολεμον ορμητηριω τη Ζακανθαιων πολει.” & F.W.

Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 324.

to Hannibal regarding Saguntum, Demetrius invaded, along with his ally Scerdilaidas, the territory of the Atintanes, also under the protection of Rome. After he failed to take the Greek port city of Pylos, Demetrius ravaged the Aegean coastline. The Roman response was devastating. In 219 two consuls, Lucius Aemilius Paulus, and Marcus Livius Salinator, attacked along the Illyrian coast with 20,000 troops. With Rome busy in Illyria, Hannibal laid siege to Saguntum. The logistics of sending troops across the Adriatic to Illyria is probably the defining reason for Rome's slow response to the Saguntine plight.

Hannibal's 1st Strategy: The Dissolution of the Roman Alliance by Blitzkrieg

Strategy, narrowly defined, means "the art of the general" (from the Greek *στρατηγος*). In warfare strategy is the science or art of employing all the military, economic, political, and other resources of a nation to achieve the object of war. In its military aspect, the term has to do with stratagems by which a general sought to deceive an enemy, with plans he made for a campaign, and with the way he moved and disposed his forces in war. Often defined as the art of projecting and directing campaigns, military strategy came to preempt almost the whole field of generalship, short of the battlefield itself. Strategic intelligence, however, aims at acquiring information that affects the conduct and direction of a whole campaign in a region or theatre of war. Its scope extends beyond the purview of the purely military. In an attempt to wage a war effectively a commander must have knowledge of the enemy that extends into the social, political, and economic structure that condition the way his opponents will act in the field as well as weaknesses he might exploit to his own advantage.²⁵⁴

Hannibal planned his famous campaigns far ahead and because of this should be singled out as a forerunner of the modern art of grand strategy. As important as

²⁵⁴ N.J.E. Austin & N.B. Rankov, Exploratio, page 12.

Hannibal's attention to strategic considerations in war and especially to strategic approaches to the battlefield may have been, his efforts to probe for Rome's psychological weaknesses and the moral defects of her leadership and less on the physical aspects explains why Polybius so admired him. Polybius makes it clear, as does Vegetius, that a really experienced and responsible general, Hannibal, simply does not move into a region which he knows next to nothing about without first obtaining thorough and detailed geographical and political intelligence.²⁵⁵

An analysis of the strategic information needed for background planning can be ascertained in the parameters given by Caesar for his invasion of Britain in 55 B.C. He needed the geography, the harbours and approaches, plus the nature of the inhabitants – information then on levels that were both physical and psychological. He further clarified this loosely defined list when he brought in people who conducted trading activities across the Channel. He asked them about the ethnic divisions, size of tribal populations, techniques of war, social, and political institutions, as well as the location of harbours suitable for a substantial number of ships.²⁵⁶ Caesar's discussion covers almost every aspect needed prior to launching a battle and demonstrates if detailed information on all of the areas can be fulfilled it would represent an ideal situation. Following this example we see how and why General Lee sent General J.E.B. Stewart on a mission, "...to gain intelligence for the guidance of future operations," further stating, "You are desired to

²⁵⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.48 & in particular Vegetius, Epitome of Military Science, trans. N.P. Milner, 2nd Ed. (Liverpool, 1996), 3.6; also, N.J.E. Austin & N.B. Rankov, Exploratio, page 13.

²⁵⁶ Caesar, Gallic War, trans. H.J. Edwards, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1917), 4.20 & Suetonius, The Deified Julius, trans. J.C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), 58.1.

make a secret movement to the rear of the enemy...with a view of gaining intelligence of his operations, communications, etc...”²⁵⁷

The ancients’ use of undercover agents is well known in history; Livy reports of a Carthaginian spy at large in Rome two years before his capture in 217. Because his hands were cut off rather than his being executed suggests he may have been a Roman citizen in the pay of Carthage.²⁵⁸ However, literary evidence suggests that the Romans did not usually initiate action in response to intelligence against the enemy; instead they took action only in reaction to incidents after they occurred. This seems true throughout the history of the Republic and Principate. A deeply ingrained belief existed that Rome might lose the occasional battle, but the war would inevitably be won and Roman forces were adequate to deal with any military problems that might occur.²⁵⁹

To a considerable extent battles – often short and furious – held the centre of the military stage. Hannibal’s advance planning and bold strategic maneuvers from Spain across the Alps and Italy showed an appreciation of strategic problems most extraordinary for his time. This broadened scope of strategy has tended to blur distinctions customarily drawn by earlier writers between strategy and statesmanship and between garden varieties and higher, or “grand,” forms of strategy. Despite the fact that there is still no agreed definition of the precise meaning of the term strategy, few students of the subject any longer accept the earlier narrow definition.

It is a likely assumption that Hannibal used Saguntum to set his plans for the invasion of Italy in motion. The timing of the invasion in relation to the events leading up to it suggests that Hannibal contemplated invasion from the outset, and had taken

²⁵⁷ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 192.

²⁵⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.33.1.

²⁵⁹ N.J.E. Austin & N.B. Rankov, Exploratio, pages 12-13.

preliminary steps to prepare for it. Saguntum's capture was necessary for Hannibal could not leave a pro-Roman city as an unconquered bridgehead deep in his rear. Saguntum itself was situated about one mile from the coast on a high plateau reaching out to the sea. The surrounding rich agricultural land was under intense cultivation, which represented an abundant source of supply for Hannibal's army. With Saguntum's fall he had established a secure base with a plentiful supply of natural resources to maintain his hardy troops, plus it allowed him to guarantee support in Africa if Carthage needed it. Hannibal was setting Spain in order prior to initiating his main push the following year. He also must have been aware that to have the conflict begin in Spain encouraged the Romans to believe Spain would be the major theatre of the war. Before proceeding to consider the evidence in favour of this interpretation, we must consider the range of possibilities involved.

In forcing a crisis over Saguntum, Hannibal accepted a confrontation with Rome, but this need not imply that he assumed or expected all-out war. He might well have believed, or at least hoped, the Romans would back down at some point. Polybius indicates that the Saguntines had been warning Rome of Carthaginian activities for some time, but "The Romans, who had more than once paid little attention to them."²⁶⁰ Likewise, the Romans may have believed that simply by re-affirming their friendship with Saguntum they would force Hannibal to back down. That is to say one side or both may have entered the game for limited stakes, only to find themselves drawn into more than they had planned for, though it becomes obvious by Hannibal's later actions that he knew full well what result would come of the attack.²⁶¹ Although Lincoln probably

²⁶⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 3.15.2. "Ρωμαιοι δε, πλεονακις αυτων παρακηκοοτες,..." & F.W.

Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 320.

²⁶¹ N.J.E. Austin & N.B. Rankov, Exploratio, page 12 & T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, page 163.

realized the probability that the Fort Sumter expedition would be attacked, he surely assumed it possible that the South would acquiesce. If the expedition ended in battle, it is likely Lincoln did not anticipate a protracted and bloody war. He may have expected a brief contest, which would lead to the quick restoration of the Union. In accepting the risk of conflict, Lincoln could not have envisioned the war that actually came to pass.²⁶²

Wars have often expanded far beyond the initial objectives or intentions of either warring parties, and had consequences out of all proportion to the issues that supposedly gave rise to them. Such incidents lead to war when the two sides already view one another as potential enemies, and thus regard war as likely if not inevitable. Motives for escalation are well illustrated by the Roman Senate's debate over the Mamertine crisis,²⁶³ an episode within living memory and certainly known to Hannibal. It is precisely the refusal to back down in the face of a perceived rival, which causes incidents to be viewed as provocation, and provocation to escalate into war. Turning to the War Between the States we see the strategies of the North and the South rooted in different political objectives. The objective of the North was to prevent the Southern states from seceding from the Union; that of the South was to attain independence.²⁶⁴ The dual purposes of the Confederate strategy were to convince the North that forcing the South to remain in the Union was not worth the cost and to bring about foreign intervention in favour of the

²⁶² D.M. Potter, "Why the Republicans Rejected Both Compromise and Secession", Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis (New York, 1979), pages 107-113.

²⁶³ Polybius, The Histories, 1.10 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 57-58 & 62-63.

²⁶⁴ J.L. Harsh, Confederate Tide Rising: Robert E. Lee and the Making of Southern Strategy, 1861-1862 (Ohio, 1998) page 5.

South.²⁶⁵ In this context Rome may have been prepared to go to war over Saguntum, nevertheless they probably did not view war as imminent, and did not involve themselves in Saguntine affairs with the specific intent of provoking Hannibal to war. Instead, they viewed it at most as an opportunity to strengthen Roman influence within Spain at the expense both of Carthage and the Barcas. The fact is the Romans, having reasserted their alliance with Saguntum and their right of involvement in its dispute with Hannibal, failed to take any direct measures to defend or support the Saguntines, instead leaving them to their own devices and ultimately to their fate. The Romans may have been cynical about Saguntum for its own sake, but even if they did not care what happened to the Saguntines themselves, Rome could hardly be indifferent to the cost of its fall to their own reputation within Spain. The message sent to the rest of Spain by the fall of Saguntum could hardly have been clearer as when Livy puts it in the mouth of a spokesman for the Volciani at the time Rome came to seek allies for a campaign in Spain:

“ ‘With what face, Romans, can you ask us to prefer your friendship to the Carthaginian, when those who did so have been more cruelly betrayed by you, their allies, than destroyed by their enemy, the Phoenician? You must seek allies, in my opinion, only where the disaster of Saguntum is unknown. To the Spanish peoples the ruins of Saguntum will constitute a warning, no less emphatic than deplorable, that none should trust to the honour or alliance of the Romans.’ ”²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy: The Process of Victory and Defeat (New York, 1992), pages 128-136.

²⁶⁶ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.19.9-10. “‘Quae verecundia est, Romani, postulare ponamus, cum qui id fecerunt crudelius quam Poenus hostis perdidit vos socii prodideritis? Ibi quaeratis socios, censeo, ubi Saguntina clades ignota est: Hispanis populis sicut lugubre ita insigne documentum Sagunti ruinae erunt, ne quis fidei Romanae aut societati confidat.’ ”

Even though Livy shaped the tone of the scene, the Roman Senate did not have to read the Sibylline Books to know in advance how the fall of Saguntum would be viewed in Spain. Rome would be exposed as a “paper tiger”. Any Spanish town council or tribal chieftain could draw the obvious conclusion that Livy attributes to the Volciani: alliance with Rome conferred no protection. It would be a poor footing on which to launch a war against Hannibal and Spain.

Cisalpine Gaul had only lately been pacified, and rebellion was always possible, and indeed erupted the next year, fueled by the powerful inducement of Hannibal’s invasion army. With Rome embroiled in Illyria, they faced the prospect that the war might serve as pretext to draw in Macedonia.²⁶⁷ It was no opportune time, then, to dispatch a consular army to Spain to reinforce Saguntum. Why, then, did the Romans choose to assert their alliance with Saguntum, if they were not prepared to back it up with legions? First, the Romans may have assumed they would not actually have to do so. They were bluffing; trusting that the mere assertion of the alliance would lead Hannibal to back down, and thus strengthen their sphere of influence in Spain by the sheer power of their reputation. Intimidation based upon a bluff had succeeded with Carthage before, in the case of Sardinia, and was the essence of their policy with the Carthaginians. They were then caught when Hannibal called their bluff, besieged Saguntum and took the city before Rome could move troops from Illyria to reinforce them.

By taking the Saguntum Hannibal solidified his own position in Spain and weakened that of Rome. If Rome backed down, he would have discredited them in Spain at no cost to himself beyond that of taking position against them. Hannibal was aware of Rome’s other commitments and embroilments and knew Rome could not take active steps

²⁶⁷ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.16 & F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, pages 324-327.

to defend Saguntum even if it chose to do so. He might have reasoned Rome would view diplomatic retreat as preferable to asserting an alliance they could not actively support. He might further have assumed the Saguntines, knowing Roman military support could not be immediately forthcoming, would yield quickly.

Why then did Hannibal choose to bring the war to Italy? It is clear Hannibal never entertained a defensive war against Rome, for this would have been fundamentally opposed to the primary motivation of the Barcas in the event of a new conflict with Rome. The fundamental aim of Carthage and the heart of Hannibal's strategy were simple: to reverse the outcome of the 1st Roman War by placing Rome in subjugation to Carthage. A defensive strategy where Carthage allowed Rome to seize the initiative and dictate Spain as the main theatre of war would not accomplish this goal. Hannibal must have determined the only means for Carthage to triumph over Rome were to defeat Rome on her home ground; or by taking the war to Italy, to cause the Romans such devastation and discord with her allies she would be forced to sue for peace.²⁶⁸ The timing of events offers reason to conclude Hannibal chose this course from the time he succeeded command in Spain.

To ascertain Hannibal's objectives we need to closely examine Davis and Lee's views on offensive operations. After the war President Davis denied that the Confederacy had ever undertaken offensive military operations, in 1861 we see Davis and Gen. Robert E. Lee with similar views regarding the proper conduct of the war. Joseph Harsh in *Confederate Tide Rising* describes Davis as supporting the idea known as "carrying the

²⁶⁸ A. Goldsworthy, *The Punic Wars*, pages 155-156.

war into Africa.”²⁶⁹ In agreement, Lee eagerly anticipated an offensive operation.²⁷⁰ He had no illusions about conquering the Union state. The Confederacy certainly lacked the necessary resources to do that; but if he could stage a swift, massive, and punishing raid well into Northern territory, perhaps he could demolish the Union’s will to continue the fight and thereby force a favourable negotiated peace.²⁷¹ He was convinced that only quick and decisive battlefield victories would prevent the North from eventually defeating them with its overwhelming advantage in men and materials. He further believed the best way to realize these objectives was to carry the war into the North and to defeat the Union armies in their own territory.²⁷² If the South were to win its objectives, it had to win a short war by striking swiftly using an offensive blitzkrieg strategy just as Hannibal decided with his advance into Italy.

The Political and Logistical Reasons for a Land Invasion of Italy²⁷³

Surely the ill success of the fleet in the 1st Roman War influenced Hannibal to concentrate the war effort on his army, thereby making it necessary for him to attempt the invasion of Italy by land. As discussed in the previous chapter Hannibal rejected the

²⁶⁹ Harsh explains that this phrase originated with Punic Wars as an expression of the Roman belief that Carthage could not be defeated in Italy but only on its home ground in northern Africa. J.L. Harsh, Confederate Tide Rising, page 19.

²⁷⁰ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, pages 11-26.

²⁷¹ B. Davis, Gray Fox: Robert E. Lee and the Civil War (Short Hills, NJ, 1956), pages 107-128.

²⁷² Dodge states, “A bold attack is always the surest defense; and aware that war must be mainly waged on land, - for Carthage had no fleet to cope with Rome,- Hannibal saw that to carry it into Italy would do much to keep it away from Carthage, as well as put the waste of maintaining the struggle on the enemy’s soil.” It must be noted that Dodge was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Union Army and served at the battle of Gettysburg. T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 163-164.

²⁷³ For more on this discussion, see J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal’s War, pages 29-32.

alternative of a sea borne invasion even though a sea crossing would have had the immense advantage of minimizing the wear and tear on his troops.²⁷⁴ Direct sea transport of his vast army also would have required an enormous transport fleet. Livy alleges that Hannibal needed 400 transport ships to take his men to Italy by sea.²⁷⁵ If his assumption is correct, Carthage could probably have put at least this number of ships at his disposal since six years later in 212 they scraped together 700 vessels for the relief of Syracuse.²⁷⁶ The worry of transporting his war elephants and horses should not have been a factor in weighing the decision toward a land invasion. Elephants were transported to Hannibal at Locri from Carthage in 215,²⁷⁷ and Mago received horse and elephants from Carthage.²⁷⁸ Livy asserts that Mago took horses with him from Minorca to Liguria in 205;²⁷⁹ therefore, there is little reason to believe the war animals could not have been transported by ship. Even given the restrictions of the number of transport ships needed to carry the troops, animals, and supplies entirely by sea, there remained the alternative of a coastal march with a supporting fleet of supply transports and escort warships.

A coastwise march offered the best of both worlds. Ships could transport the army's baggage-train far more efficiently than could pack animals, and reduce if not eliminate its dependence on local supplies along the line of march. The quantity of shipping required would have been far less than for direct physical transport of the whole army, and could surely have been provided by Carthage itself even if sufficient shipping

²⁷⁴ See W.L. Rodgers, Greek and Roman Naval Warfare, pages 308-322 for a description of all naval positions and actions from the end of the 1st Roman War to the beginning of Hannibal's march.

²⁷⁵ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 29.26.3.

²⁷⁶ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 25.27.4.

²⁷⁷ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 23.41.10.

²⁷⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 29.4.6.

²⁷⁹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 28.46.7.

was not available in Spain. Moreover, while this route of march would pass along rugged sections of coast, and require crossing the Ligurian Apennines to reach Hannibal's target destination of the upper Po Valley, a primarily coastal route would avoid the more difficult passage of the Alps required by the inland route that Hannibal chose. However, the route up the Durance Valley and over the Col de Montgenevre -- probably the route Hannibal originally intended to take -- was much easier than the coastal route. Traveling along the coast and not turning north into the Alps, his army would have to pass through Massilia's territory, the threat of which Rome would have assuredly sent troops in its defense.

The question, then, is why he elected to forego the advantages of either sea transport or a coastwise march with a supporting fleet. Two possible answers may be ventured. First, either of these options would have heightened his dependence on Carthage for maritime support, and second -- not unrelated -- it would inevitably have involved him in a naval as well as a land campaign.

Once war came, Livy describes some rather desultory naval raiding by the Carthaginians,²⁸⁰ while Polybius does not allow for that much. Certainly, there is no indication of a full mobilization by Carthage in support of Hannibal's war plan. Based on the texts by Livy and Polybius, by 217 B.C. there is reason to believe Hannibal and Carthage were concerting plans since a fleet slipped through from Sardinia to Pisa to meet him.²⁸¹ Had Hannibal's plans made him dependent on aid from Carthage in the form of ships -- transports and warships -- he might have found himself stalled by endless dithering and promises of support that failed to materialize. Worse, a demand for large-

²⁸⁰ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.49-51.

²⁸¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.96.8-10 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 431.

scale active support might have tipped the political balance within Carthage toward Hanno and the antiwar party. Thus, Hannibal seems to have determined from the outset a plan of campaign dependant almost entirely on Spanish supplies and reinforcements executed with Barcid resources, and asked nothing of Carthage but limited endorsement.

Such a plan limited Hannibal's maritime resources to those available in Spain. The defensive forces he left to his brother Hasdrubal included fifty quinqueremes, two quadriremes, and five triremes.²⁸² At Ecnomus in 256, each Roman quinquereme is said to have had 300 rowers and 120 marines,²⁸³ and the Carthaginian ships are implied to have had the same. There is some reason to believe that 40 was the normal complement of marines, but the figure 300 for the rowers is usually accepted – 32 quinqueremes would have required 9600 rowers, and at least 1280 marines – but must have been in the range of 250 to 300 rowers and 100 to 200 marines, sailors and supernumeraries; the crews of triremes and quadriremes would have been in proportion. The total manpower required to fully man the fleet was thus on the order of about 14,000 to 17,000 men. This is a sizable number, but not an enormous one, particularly when compared to the size of Hannibal's invasion army. Moreover, the fleet was only partly manned, only thirty-two quinqueremes and the five triremes having full crews provided.²⁸⁴ The fleet was thus below full manpower strength by as much as a third. It is true that men committed to the fleet were more or less unavailable for land service, but it may also be that skilled

²⁸² Polybius, The Histories, 3.33 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.10-22.4.

²⁸³ Polybius, The Histories, 1.26.7-8 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 86.

²⁸⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 1.26.7 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 86.

personnel for working the ships were lacking, and that this placed the critical limit on the number of ships that were manned for service.

Even if seamen were available to fully man the existing ships, these were not enough for a sea borne operation on the scale Hannibal contemplated. Scipio the elder required a slightly larger naval force of sixty quinqueremes to transport by sea a consular army of two legions, 14,000 allied infantry, and 1,600 allied cavalry, or some 25,000 men and 2,000 horses; the quinqueremes probably serving in a transport role, since active Barcid naval opposition was not anticipated.²⁸⁵ The proportional requirement for supply and support of a coastwise march would have been smaller than for direct transport; in any case calling for a substantial additional commitment of resources to the sea component. Those resources, unless provided by Carthage itself, had to be taken away from the land army.

This diversion of resources might seem sufficient reason in itself to reject a coastwise advance. Diversion of material and human resources was not, however, the only consideration Hannibal faced. A sea borne movement, or even a combined-forces advance with a naval component, inevitably meant some division of focus: it meant fighting a naval war as well as a land war. To commit resources to a fleet, and to incorporate that fleet in one's plan of campaign, was to make that plan hostage to the fleet's success.

Had Hannibal transported his army by sea, he would have had to fight the Romans at sea, and against a much more powerful fleet than Scipio's. At the same time Scipio was dispatched to Spain with his sixty quinqueremes, the Romans assigned no fewer than 160 quinqueremes to Sempronius for operations against Africa.²⁸⁶ In the face of a sea borne

²⁸⁵ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.27.

²⁸⁶ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.27.

invasion by Hannibal, the Romans obviously would have assigned a far greater naval component to Scipio. Hannibal would have required a naval force adequate to meet it, and with everything in the balance, would have had to fight and win at sea before he could engage the Romans on land.

A coastal advance with a covering fleet would have reduced but not eliminated his dependence on naval action. A coastal march would surely have brought him into direct contact with Scipio, who undoubtedly would have landed his army, as he did while Hannibal was crossing the Rhône to help defend Massilia from the perceived threat. Had the armies fought, there is every reason to assume that Hannibal would have won. The fruits of victory could still have been lost, however, if the Romans won a naval engagement between the respective escorting fleets. Even an inconclusive outcome at sea might leave Hannibal unable to advance, his supply ships bottled up and his seaward flank exposed. With the ever-present Roman sea power, which had been strongly maintained ever since the end of the 1st Roman War, Hannibal could not consider an amphibious landing on the coast of Italy.

Apart from the immediate hazards of battle, introducing a naval component to the operation meant in effect opening a new theatre of war, and with it a whole range of new strategic requirements and constraints. Galley fleets were heavily dependent on bases and could not operate freely far from their own, especially in the presence of a hostile base sheltering an enemy “fleet in being”. In his actual inland march, Hannibal simply skirted and ignored the pro-Roman Greek city of Massilia; a coastal advance might well have compelled him to take that city – at what cost in time and effort? – in order to eliminate it as a Roman fleet base athwart his own fleet’s line of advance. Once he reached Italy, he would again be faced with the implicit need to secure a base for his fleet, and the further need to shape a strategy that assigned a useful role to it. The alternative would be to send

it back to Spain, losing the effective use of it after having invested great resources and effort in it.²⁸⁷

Hannibal had no reason to have confidence in either a Carthaginian home fleet or a Barcid fleet. Carthage might have a maritime and naval tradition, but Hannibal himself came from a family of soldiers, and what he surely heard from childhood was that it was Carthage's navy, not its army that had fallen short in the 1st Roman War. He himself, as a general who regularly used terrain to his advantage, might have seen only disadvantages in fighting at sea, where terrain was not a factor.

Given all these considerations, it is understandable that Hannibal rejected both a sea borne operation and a combined-force advance along the coast with the quasi-maritime strategy the latter implied. He thereby avoided a variety of risks and uncertainties. He had no need to build a fleet or depend on Carthage to provide one, or to risk it against a Rome fleet that had won most of the battles in the previous war, or to add the complications and distractions of a maritime component to his plan of campaign.

Hannibal believed that by following a land route he would avoid the logistical problems his father encountered in Sicily during the first war. Hamilcar had been isolated in Sicily, dependent on Carthaginian ships for reinforcements and supplies. The Carthaginian navy had failed Hamilcar due to a combination of natural disasters, poor strategy and the sheer strength of the Roman fleet. This, coupled with the lack of support by the Carthaginian senate, had caused his ultimate defeat. Hannibal would not allow his forces to be dependent on supply by sea or the good will of the senate. He would take a new initiative and control the land route as Rome had done in the first war. Hannibal concluded that this war could not be fought like the first if Carthage were to succeed. The

²⁸⁷ N.B. Rankov, "The Second Punic War at Sea", page 55.

new war must involve a reversal of roles among the major combatants; therefore, Carthage must be on the offensive and invade Italy by land.

To identify the reasons for Hannibal's offensive decision, an examination of Lee provides us with unmatched insight. Lee's penchant for offensive strategy and tactics has come under heavy attack from historians over the past two decades. The Army of Northern Virginia suffered heavy casualties in its celebrated triumphs during 1862 and 1863, and various scholars have argued that a more defensive conventional strategy or a guerrilla strategy would have conserved manpower, thereby enabling the Confederacy to prolong the war and perhaps exhaust Union will. Such analysis overlooks the fact that Lee's strategic and tactical aggressiveness suited Confederate expectations and countered superior Union numbers. Civilians hungered for news of aggressive success on the battlefield, which conveyed a sense of progress toward independence. Their morale required the type of victories Lee supplied from the Seven Days through Chancellorsville, and without which the Confederacy almost certainly would have collapsed sooner. This example offers us a strong association as to how Hannibal could have seen the eventual incorporation of the Carthaginian empire by Rome if an invasion was not launched.

With all the necessary preparations in place, Hannibal set forth on his long march. Before we follow him, it is necessary to first look at the preparations Rome had made for the pending war with Carthage. With their naval superiority and secure shipping lanes, the Romans surely felt the second war would merely be a replay of the first. Their plan of attack entailed a two-pronged approach: one against North Africa, one against Spain. They intended to transport their troops from Italy to Spain, controlling the sea while the Roman legions defeated Hannibal on land. With Hannibal's defeat, Spain would become another addition to Rome's empire. After establishing naval and ground superiority over Hannibal, they would then invade Carthage itself. What they did not anticipate was that

Hannibal would succeed at accomplishing the impossible and bring the war to Rome itself. They never suspected that Hannibal planned to attack Italy; they assumed that he would not risk a sea invasion because of their naval superiority. They further reasoned the formidable barriers of the Pyrenees and the Alps, coupled with the inhabitation of these areas by the savage Celts, would preclude a land invasion. As we will soon discover, the Romans were ill prepared for a war against Hannibal. Livy points out how unaware they were of the impending situation as follows:

“The Sardinians and Corsicans, the Histrians and Illyrians, had provoked but had hardly exercised the Roman arms; while against the Gauls there had been desultory fighting rather than real war. But the Phoenician was an old and experienced enemy, who in the hardest kind of service amongst the Spanish tribes had for three and twenty years invariably got the victory; he was accustomed to the keenest of commanders, was flushed with the conquest of a very wealthy city, and crossing the Ebro and drawing after him the many Spanish peoples which he had enlisted, would be rousing up the Gallic tribes – always eager to unsheathe the sword – and the Romans would have to contend in war with all the world, in Italy and under the walls of Rome.”²⁸⁸

All of the ancient authors are interested in Hannibal’s choice to move his army against Rome via the Alps, but no one is certain when he first decided on this particular

²⁸⁸ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.16.4-6. “Sardos Corsosque et Histros atque Illyrios laccessisse magis quam exercuisse Romana arma et cum Gallia tumultuatum verius quam belligeratum: Poenum hostem veteranum, trium et viginti annorum militia durissima inter hispanas gentes semper victorem, duci acerrimo adsuetum, recentem ab excidio opulentissimae urbis, Hiberum transire, trahere secum tot excitos Hispanorum populos, concitum avidas semper armorum Gallicas gentes; cum orbe terrarum bellum gerendum in Italia ac pro moenibus Romanis esse.” Of course these are Livy’s words. Rome was unaware that Hannibal was on his way.

plan of invasion. Nonetheless Hannibal must have anticipated a continued delivery of supplies and manpower from Spain as shown by Cornelius Scipio's discovery in 218 of large amounts of cash and materials left by Hanno at Cissa.²⁸⁹ In a very real sense the success of the plan hinged on the Celtic tribes' support of him logistically, both locally and in an open route from Spain. In view of the fact that anxiety about food and material dominated much of Lee's strategy, we must presume logistics to have been of great concern for Hannibal as well. Fresh from victory at Chancellorsville, he began to lay bold plans for taking the war to the North in hopes of relieving the Union offensives against Richmond and the pressures off war-torn Virginia, which might further improve the food situation for the coming year. Southern resources were beginning to show the strain of war and another campaign in Virginia would be disastrous to the farmers of the area because they could neither plant nor harvest their crops.²⁹⁰ His grasp of strategy extended far beyond the borders of Virginia; he recognized that Vicksburg, last of the Confederate strongholds on the Mississippi River, would in time fall. Lee understood the significance of what Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was accomplishing in the west; and that if he began an offensive strike into Northern territory, many of those western-based Union troops would be moved east. Meanwhile, he developed his plans further: he intended to spread his troops over the rich farms of central Pennsylvania, reaping a rich harvest.²⁹¹ As a result it was with decided relief that the returning envoy from the Po Valley in early May brought him the welcome news of the Celts intended cooperation and that they, in fact, eagerly awaited the arrival of the Carthaginian army. Magilos, a Celtic chieftain of the Boii, met

²⁸⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.76.1-7; Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.60.

²⁹⁰ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, pages 124-127.

²⁹¹ A.A. Nofi, The Gettysburg Campaign, June-July 1863, 3rd Ed. (Conshohocken, PA, 1996), pages 47 & 50-51.

Hannibal at the Rhône therefore it is safe to presume that the envoys traveled as far as Bologna, the main centre of the Boii.²⁹² Additionally, his agents reported that while passage across the Alps for a large army would be very difficult, it was nevertheless possible. Although crossing the Alps would grant Hannibal the vitally important element of surprise, there can be little doubt he fully appreciated that his army would suffer tremendous losses as it made its way through the treacherous mountain passes. Then again, he did have sound reasons for believing that many of the losses he would necessarily incur in getting his army to Italy would be made good by recruiting the Cisalpine Gauls as his allies. Leading up to his campaign:

“He [Hannibal] had informed himself accurately about the fertility of the land at the foot of the Alps and near the river Po, the denseness of its population, the bravery of the men in war, and above all their hatred of Rome ever since that former war with the Romans...He therefore cherished high hopes of them, and was careful to send messengers with unlimited promises to the Celtic chiefs both on this side of the Alps and in the mountains themselves, thinking that the only means of carrying the war against the Romans into Italy was, after surmounting,

²⁹² Polybius, The Histories, 3.34.4.

“σαφός γὰρ ἐξητάκει καὶ τὴν ἀρετὴν τῆς ὑπο τὰς Ἀλπεὶς καὶ περὶ τὸν Πάδον ποταμὸν χώρας καὶ τὸ πλῆθος πολέμους τῶν ἀνδρῶν τολμᾶν, καὶ τὸ μέγιστον τὴν ὑπαρχούσαν δυσμενείαν αὐτοῖς ἐκ τοῦ προγεγονότος πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίους, ὑπὲρ οὗ δηλῶμεν ἡμεῖς ἐν τῇ προ ταύτης βυβλῷ χάριν τοῦ συμπεριφερεσθαι τοὺς ἐντυγχانونτας τοῖς νῦν μέλλουσι λεγέσθαι. διόπερ εἶχετο ταύτας τῆς ἐλπίδος, καὶ πάν ὑπισχνεῖτο, διαπεμπομενὸς ἐπιμελῶς πρὸς τοὺς δυναστας τῶν Κελτῶν καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ ταῖς καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐταῖς ταῖς Ἀλπεσὶν ἐνοικούντας, μόνως ἀν ὑπολαμβάνων ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ συστήσασθαι τὸν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον, εἰ δυνήθει διαπερημένους ἀφικέσθαι τοποὺς καὶ συνεργοὺς καὶ συμμαχοὺς χρῆσασθαι Κελτοῖς εἰς τὴν προκειμένην ἐπιβολήν.”

if possible, the difficulties of the route, to reach the above country and employ the Celts as co-operators and confederates in his enterprise.”²⁹³

As I shall argue three factors are crucial in assessing the sound strategic thinking Hannibal used in his decision to invade Italy by land:

1) An alternative to his strategy would have been to stand on the defensive and resist Roman attacks in Spain and Africa.²⁹⁴ From the preparations he took to safeguard Spain and Africa, it is clear that he expected such an attack. He must have calculated that a defensive war would have fallen into a pattern similar to the 1st Roman War with Spain taking the place of Sicily. He might defeat the Roman armies, but he must have known that the Roman resources were such that they could easily replace their losses and continue to fight on two fronts until Carthage was exhausted. While he himself, on the other hand, could not be in two places at the same time. Hannibal must have known that over half the manpower at Rome’s disposal came from her allies in Italy and many had fought bitterly against her encroachments; therefore, if Carthage was ever to defeat Rome, this alliance must be broken. A war in Spain and Africa could never be expected to do more than wear down the allies; but if a Carthaginian army invaded Italy, Rome’s allies might be induced to desert her cause and some might even become active in Carthage’s support.²⁹⁵

2) The problem of Roman sea power was paramount.²⁹⁶ Rome had a least 220 quinqueremes in commission in 218.²⁹⁷ 60 under P. Cornelius Scipio’s command as

²⁹³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.34.2-5.

²⁹⁴ C.G. Starr, The Influence of Sea Power on Ancient History (New York, 1989), pages 57-58.

²⁹⁵ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal’s War, pages 29-30.

²⁹⁶ See L. Casson, The Ancient Mariners, page 151 for the results of Roman naval dominance.

far as the mouth of the Rhône, then on to Spain under his brother, Gnaeus; and 160 under the command of T. Sempronius Longus in Sicily. Carthage had 50 quinqueremes based in Spain, although 18 of these were unmanned.²⁹⁸ Livy states that 20 more were sent to raid Italy,²⁹⁹ 35 were sent to Sicily,³⁰⁰ and later on 70 went to Sardinia.³⁰¹ If these figures are correct, Carthage had at least 50 - 100 fewer warships at the beginning of the war than Rome had in commission. In 212 B.C. of the 700 transport ships Carthage sent to Syracuse, only 130 were warships.³⁰² Hannibal's dispositions to protect Spain and Africa reflect that he also knew the Roman fleet far outnumbered the Carthaginian war-fleet. He dared not risk an invasion fleet's being intercepted at sea by a superior Roman fleet.³⁰³

- 3) The knowledge that he would find allies in Northern Italy. From 225 - 222 the Romans fought a war against the Celts of the Po Valley with the Romans defeating the Boii, crossing over the Po to defeat the Insubres and take their capital in Mediolanum in 222. In 220 Roman forces were again operating as far as the Alps and had founded the two new Latin colonies at Placentia and Cremonia. Hannibal had sent envoys to the Celtic chiefs of the Alpine region through which he intended to pass and

²⁹⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.41.2 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 377.

²⁹⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 3.33.4

²⁹⁹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.49.2.

³⁰⁰ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.49.4.

³⁰¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.96.8-12 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 431.

³⁰² Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 25.27.4.

³⁰³ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 31.

even into northern Italy in early 218.³⁰⁴ It was, therefore, reasonable to assume that both the Boii and Insubres would give his arrival a friendly reception.³⁰⁵

The Roman Alliance System

Hannibal made two crucial decisions regarding the impending war with Rome long before he ordered a single Carthaginian soldier across the Ebro: he accepted a confrontation with Rome and determined from the outset on an offensive policy of taking the war to Italy. While there can be no doubt as to Hannibal's confidence in his own military ability, he was too much a realist to rely on this alone. His military action was above all directed toward the realization of a political aim. By invading Italy, Hannibal sought to undermine Roman power by destroying the political confederation that linked the Republic and its allies, for it was this political entity that provided Rome's vast manpower advantage. If he could detach their political alliances or induce them into a policy of neutrality, he would make a tremendous impact on the Roman military might. This could be achieved if he convinced the allies the power and credibility of the Roman army had been shattered beyond repair through repeated defeats at his hands. It is my view that Hannibal must have drawn intelligence from a variety of sources on the political mood in Italy that led him to believe more than a few allies needed little incentive to defect from the Roman Alliance. Once in Italy he took every opportunity to declare his fight to be with Rome, not the allies and showed this as described by Polybius:

“Hannibal, who was wintering in Cisalpine Gaul, kept the Roman prisoners he had taken in battle in custody, giving them just sufficient to eat, but to the prisoners from the allies he continued to show the greatest kindness, and

³⁰⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.44.5 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 379.

³⁰⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 1.17.4 & 1.43.4.

afterwards called a meeting of them and addressed them, saying that he had not come to make war on them, but on the Romans for their sakes and therefore if they were wise they should embrace his friendship, for he had come first of all to re-establish the liberty of the peoples of Italy and also to help them to recover the cities and territories of which the Romans had deprived them. Having spoken so, he dismissed them all to their homes without ransom, his aim in doing so being both to gain over the inhabitants of Italy to his own cause and to alienate their affections from Rome, provoking at the same time to revolt those who thought their cities or harbours had suffered damage by Roman rule.”³⁰⁶

At a point these defections would so denude their power, Rome would be forced to sue for peace. Moreover, he must have assumed that operations undertaken to break up the alliance system would either render a siege unnecessary, or improve the prospects of success in a siege at some later date sufficiently to justify the expenditure of time and effort in a preliminary campaign against the alliance system. I base my assertions on

³⁰⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.77.3-7.

“Αννιβας δε παραχειμαζων εν τη Κελτικη τους μεν Ῥωμαίους των εκ της μαχης αιχμαλωτων εν φυλακη συνειχε, τα μετρια των επιτηδειων διδους, τους δε συμμαχους αυτων το μεν πρωτον εν τη παση φιλανθρωπια διεξηγε, μετα δε ταυτα συναγαγων παρεκαλει, φασκων ουκ εκεινοις ηκειν πολεμησων, αλλα Ῥωμαίοις υπερ εκεινων. διοπερ εφη δειν αυτους, εαν ορθως φρονωσιν, αντεχεσθαι της προς αυτον φιλιας. παρειναι γαρ πρωτον μεν την ελευθεριαν ανακτησομενος Ἰταλιωταις. ομοιως δε τας πολεις και την χωραν, ην υπο Ῥωμαίων απολωλεκοτες εκαστοι τυγχανοισι, συνανασωσων. ταυτα δ’ ειπων αφηκε παντας χωπις λυτρων εις την οικειαν, βουλομενος αμα μεν προκαλεισθαι δια τοιουτου τροπου προς αυτον τους κατοικουντας την Ἰταλιαν. αμα δ’ απαλλοτριουν της προς Ῥωμαίους ευνοιας, ερεθιζειν δε τους δοκουντας πολεσιν η λιμεσιν ηλαττωσθαι τι δια της Ῥωμαίων αρχης.” See also, K. Lomas, Roman Italy 338 B.C.-AD 200, page 23.

Lee's crucial decisions. He determined that since the Army of the Potomac could not be brought to action under favourable circumstances in Virginia, he needed to transfer the field of operations to Northern soil where a victory promptly followed up with another would give him possession of Baltimore or Washington. Additionally, a Confederate thrust north might relieve pressure on Vicksburg since Northerners might demand garrisons in their cities, which would withdraw troops from the west. Finally, if England and France witnessed an aggressive and victorious South, they might enter the war on behalf of the beleaguered Confederacy, or at least give the Union reason to pursue peaceful settlement with the South before they took an active interest in the war.³⁰⁷ "In short, an offensive could well win the war."³⁰⁸ In case President Davis would not consent to a bolder offensive, he could at least clear Virginia of the enemy, a necessary preliminary to an invasion of the North. At worst if Lee's gamble failed, the Confederacy would lose its principal army and, with it, the war, yet that could also happen without a Northern invasion.

The question is why Hannibal and Lee may have so miscalculated at the outset and why their decided courses of action failed to provide either with the gains they needed. First, Hannibal had a theory of the Roman Alliance System from which he drew conclusions about the potential lack of cohesiveness when under attack. Whereas Lee, seeing the North become increasingly despondent over the progress of the war with the repeated failures of the Northern armies and their extremely high casualties, believed he could build momentum for the growing Northern peace movement by shifting his army to Northern soil. Yet both theories proved incorrect. The Roman Alliance held firm and

³⁰⁷ A.A. Nofi, The Gettysburg Campaign, June-July 1863, pages 17-23.

³⁰⁸ A.A. Nofi, The Gettysburg Campaign, June-July 1863, page 18.

subsequent Union victories encourage the North's sagging morale, causing the peace movement to lose its momentum.

Hannibal as well as Lee's ultimate failures do not prove that their strategic theories were defective. Suppose that when Hannibal appeared before Neapolis and defeated its cavalry,³⁰⁹ the Neapolitans had opened their gates to him. They had every reason to do so; Hannibal was plainly on the ascendant. Rome's armies were smashed and the Neapolitans lacked the strong emotive ties to Rome that a Latin city might have felt. Had Neapolis gone over, other cities might have followed, in addition to those like Capua that actually did change sides. With a major seaport secured, Hannibal could have secured direct reinforcements from Carthage, or at least have opened a naval front to further stretch Rome's resources. The overall balance might have swung inexorably toward Hannibal and Carthage, and against Rome.

None of this happened; the gates of Neapolis remained firmly shut and Hannibal had to move on. Yet a decision by a handful of leading Neapolitans might have changed the outcome with incalculable results. That Hannibal's strategy failed in the event does not prove that it was foredoomed to fail. Yet, the fact is the gates of Neapolis remained shut to Hannibal, in spite of all the logical reasons to open them. The unavoidable implication is that the Roman Alliance System had greater resilience, overall, than Hannibal had counted on. The questions arise again: what did Hannibal expect, and why was he wrong?

Even though there is no direct evidence for Hannibal's analysis of the Roman Alliance System, he more than likely knew of Rome's alliances through Pyrrhus' attack on Rome. Hannibal considered Pyrrhus to be the second greatest general of all time and Pyrrhus wrote books on strategy and tactics, which may have contained information on

³⁰⁹ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 23.1.5-7.

how to confront the Romans.³¹⁰ It must be remembered that the manipular tactical system was unique to Rome. What we do know is that the dominating political institution of the Mediterranean cultural world, of which Carthage remained a dominant force, was the city-state.

In most of the Mediterranean world the normal and proper state of affairs was for city-states to be sovereign, independent entities. Although nearly all leagues and federations had weak central institutions that impinged minimally on local city-state supremacy, a combination of several small city-states into one large polity, such as the Aeolian and Achaean Leagues, were successful, but these were in the minority. So much was local independence the norm that even conquerors rarely imposed any form of direct administration. The usual practice with a subjugated city, unless it was destroyed outright, was to establish some friendly local faction in power, or to make the city a subject-ally in an unequal alliance, or some combination of the two. The characteristic most relevant to Hannibal's politico-military strategy was this very strong tradition of local independence and local patriotism. Neither Polybius nor Livy spells out Hannibal's politico-military strategy, possibly, because they regarded it as obvious due to the commonality in the ancient world of the tradition of local patriotism.

Whatever Hannibal knew about the specific characteristics of the Roman system, he was surely familiar with the general pattern in antiquity of subject-alliances as the predominant means by which one city-state established its dominance over others. He was likewise doubtless aware that these unequal alliance relationships tended to be fragile, unstable, and insecure. The fragility of these relationships was inherent in the localism that, if not precisely an ideology in the modern sense, was so central to the value

³¹⁰ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 35.14.5ff & Plutarch, *Parallel Lives: Flamininus*, trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1921), 21.3.

system of city-state culture; subordination of one city to another was viewed as a rather unnatural state of affairs. A city-state subjected to some other power, whether another city-state or a dynastic king, could almost automatically be expected to rebel if the opportunity arose.³¹¹

Internal factionalism exacerbated the fragility of subordinate alliances to which individual city-states were characteristically prone. The dominant partner placed a friendly faction in control of the subordinate partner often reinforced a subject-alliance relationship.³¹² Such a practice almost guaranteed the existence of rival factions, whose readiness to revolt was amplified by their desire to topple the faction in power and take its place. Even where social or class divisions were not a factor, factional rivalries were common, for example among rival aristocratic families or clans, providing nuclei for possible rebellion within a subject-ally.

Two conditions, if present, alleviated or at least reduced the general readiness for revolt by subject-allies: a great disparity between the unequal partners, particularly if they were geographically close. The dominant city then emerged permanently over the subject-ally, an inescapable fact of life even if a revolt should be momentarily successful or a strong traditional tie between the partners, especially ethnic ties. In the extreme case, classical Sparta had nothing to fear from the “*περιοικοί*”³¹³, the other communities of Laconia under Spartan dominance probably took place before local sentiment in the other

³¹¹ The Seleucid Empire began to collapse from city-states rebelling against its authority, beginning during the time of the 2nd Roman War.

³¹² An example being the rival alliance systems in the Peloponnesian War, in which the Athenians tended to support democratic factions within their subject-allies, while the Spartans upheld oligarchic factions within theirs.

³¹³ ‘Neighbours’.

communities had ossified into city-state patriotism. The same applies to the more extreme case of Attica; whether the cynicism of Athens was handed down from Mycenaean times, as the Theseus legend implies, or – perhaps more likely – took place in the archaic period, all Atticans regarded themselves simply as Athenian, towns like Marathon or Eleusis having no political identity to speak of. In less extreme conditions, a breakaway was always possible. Plataea, though a Boeotian city, broke away from Theban dominance and aligned itself with Athens. Even the presence of a powerful and markedly foreign common enemy was no guarantee of stability in subject-ally relationships; Syracuse never rested easy in its dominance of Greek Sicily, in spite of the hostile presence of Carthage controlling part of the island. More often than not, Syracuse was the aggressor in any war with Carthage.

A third cause of restraint on local city-state independence is noted in the cities founded by Alexander and his successors in the Hellenistic east. These cities generally accepted their subordinate role; they might be passed from one kingdom to another in the course of the successors' wars, and enjoyed broad autonomy in their internal affairs, but did not attempt to gain full independence. They were a special case, however. Founded by royal patronage, these Greek or Hellenized cities existed as islands in a culturally alien sea, and perhaps felt dependent on the security provided by Seleucid or Ptolemaic monarchs.

The examples given are all Greek, and indeed Greek localism and particularism seem to have been particularly marked. There is little indication that Carthage ever had much difficulty with the other Phoenician-derived communities in North Africa, such as nearby Utica, although Utica and Hippo Arca joined the mercenaries in the Mercenary

War³¹⁴ and the instance of Tyre versus Alexander and his successors. Shared ethnic background, the disparities in size with Carthage itself, hostile inland tribes, and isolation may all have minimized the prospects of revolt.

In Italy, city-state particularism had in the past been strong, if not quite at the Greek level. The Etruscans had never formed a permanent federation, but remained independent city-states frequently at war with one another.³¹⁵ Even the Latins, who shared ethnic identity with the Romans, had a distinct political identity, and joined in opposition against Roman dominance.³¹⁶ By 264 B.C. Rome had completed the conquest of the whole Italian peninsula, including the Greek cities of the South and now controlled the area with the help of a well-linked network of colonies and allied states. Although under Roman dominance, the Italian peninsula remained part of the city-state world, not in any sense a “nation,” but a collection of associated communities that had some form of subject-partner relationship with Rome. The composition of the Roman Alliance included the Latin colonies and at least 120 allied communities having treaty relations with Rome. These communities consisted of marked language and ethnic divisions yet at this time it was acceptable for a man to have two loyalties – one to his own *patria* and one to Rome.

Integration with Rome was easy for some Latin cities such as Tuscillum and Lanuvium. Their citizens became fully privileged Romans with their lands included in Roman territorial districts. Even though they retained their local community life,

³¹⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 1.82.9.

³¹⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 2.17.1; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 181-182 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 4.37.1. For Capua and Nola see Velleius Paterculus, The Roman History, trans. F.W. Shipley, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1924), 1.7.2-4.

³¹⁶ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities, Vol. II, trans. E. Cary, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), 3.34.3-4 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, Vol. II, trans. B.O. Foster, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1922), 4.45.3-7.

politically their future lay as Roman citizens. Other Latin communities, not so easily recognized, received only the private rights of Roman citizenship; i.e., those concerned with intermarriage and commerce. Again, these communities continued an almost autonomous local life, yet they were obliged to supply troops to Rome for joint defensive purposes. The partnership with the Latins familiarized Rome with defending its allies or “friends”.

Likewise many of the highland communities became *municipium*, a limited class of citizenship with public duties, including military obligation. Often full citizenship was awarded after a period of probation, as happened to the Sabines. The Etruscan and Greek cities of southern Italy were granted the status of *socii Italici*. Although they too were required to contribute their own contingents in case of war, they received no form of Roman citizenship. Already there was a *pax Romana* in the Italian mainland, opening up new prospects for commerce and development.

How much if anything Hannibal knew about the particular historical events mentioned above is uncertain, but it was scarcely necessary that he be familiar with specific instances. He, himself a loyal son of Carthage, was steeped in the city-state ethos, as aware of it as a modern soldier-statesman would be of the force of patriotism.

All these considerations must have given Hannibal every reason to suppose the Roman Alliance System to be vulnerable. The towns of Latium might be overawed by the size and nearness of Rome, and feel bound to it by ethnic ties, but these would not apply to the cities of Etruria, or those of Capua, and perhaps least of all to the Greek cities of southern Italy. Unlike the Sicilian Greeks, the Italian Greeks had no tradition of regarding Carthage as an enemy. Some individual Italian cities, like Capua or Tarentum, were ancient foundations not far short of Rome itself in size, wealth, and potential power. Given the opportunity they might well be eager to throw off the domination of an upstart.

Again, if we review a similar situation in the South, we find Robert E. Lee's assessment that the Confederacy had much to gain by winning over the Border States to their cause. These states, which included Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, could potentially add forty-five percent to the white population, meaning more able-bodied soldiers, as well as more industrial output and military supplies. Their location, especially Maryland, would have had tremendous strategic value. Maryland, in particular, was vitally important because it would have enclosed Washington, D.C. on three sides, putting a tremendous squeeze on the political power center of the North.

In the best case, Hannibal might hope the simple arrival of his army in Italy would be like throwing a match into a tinderbox. He was by no means dependent on an immediate and spontaneous reaction, and was rightly confident of beating Roman armies in the field. He surely knew these armies were made up of as many allied as Roman troops, if not more. We know from Polybius that in the third century the Italian allies could mobilize 360,000 men of military age on Rome's behalf with the allies outnumbering the Romans three to two.³¹⁷ It would not take many defeats, Hannibal could surmise, before the allied soldiers would be less than eager to lay down their lives for Rome, or for the allies themselves to tire of providing, and losing, troops to maintain their own subjection to Rome. Even if their current ruling circles were pro-Roman, Hannibal could anticipate that rival factions existed, equally eager to supplant the current rulers and shake off the Roman yoke. However, his pose as liberator often fell short because he and his army were foreigners in a way Rome was not.³¹⁸ In 213 Roman soldiers are said to have asked the people in Apulia why they were fighting old allies on

³¹⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 2.24 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 196-199.

³¹⁸ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 88.

behalf of “foreigners and barbarians”,³¹⁹ and trying to make Italy a tributary of Africa. Livy further states that Varro tried to persuade the Campanians to remain loyal to Rome rather than see Italy become “a province of Numidians and the Mauri.”³²⁰

In a strikingly comparable move to Hannibal Lee published a secession invitation to the citizen’s of Maryland on September 8, 1862, as follows:

“The government of your chief city has been usurped by armed strangers – your Legislature has been dissolved and by the unlawful arrest of its members – freedom of the press and of speech has been suppressed – words have been declared offenses by an arbitrary decree of the Federal Executive – and citizens ordered to be tried by military commissions for what they may dare to speak. Believing that the people of Maryland possess a spirit too lofty to submit to such a government, the people of the South have long wished to aid you in throwing off this foreign yoke to enable you again to enjoy the inalienable rights of freemen, and restore the independence and sovereignty of your state. In obedience to this wish our army has come among you, and is prepared to assist you...Marylanders shall once more enjoy their ancient freedom of thought and speech...It is for you to decide your destiny...”³²¹

Hannibal first made tentative approaches to the city of Capua after his resounding victory at Lake Trasimene, and after Capua had been in turmoil with Rome for over a year. Livy states the only deterrent to her secession was the ancient marriages between Campanian and Roman nobility, plus there were 300 young Campanian men of noble

³¹⁹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 24.47.5. “alienigenis ac barbaris”

³²⁰ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 23.5.11-13. “Numidarum ac Maurorum pati provinciam esse”

³²¹ H.S. Commager, The Civil War Archive: The History of the Civil War in Documents (New York, 2000), pages 601-602. See also B. Davis, Gray Fox, page 135.

birth fighting for Rome in Sicily.³²² Not unlike Capua at first it seemed that Maryland might join the South's position, for a strong pro-Confederacy attitude developed there shortly after the fall of Ft. Sumter when, on April 19, 1861, a Massachusetts regiment passing through on its way to Washington, D.C., shot several civilians after being attacked by an angry mob in Baltimore. Many considered the Baltimore Riot to be the first bloodshed of the War Between the States. With twelve civilians dead, scores injured, and thousands of dollars in property damage, Maryland officials demanded that no more Federal troops be sent through the state. And just to make sure their message was clear, the mayor and police chief of Baltimore approved the destruction of key rail bridges to prevent Union troops from entering the city. At the same time, secessionist sympathizers tore down telegraph wires to Washington. Nevertheless, on May 13, Federal troops occupied Baltimore and declared martial law. Federal forces would present an occupying presence in Baltimore for the duration of the war.³²³

In order to forestall a situation such as in Baltimore, Hannibal agreed to the following provisions in order to obtain an alliance with Capua: no Carthaginian should have jurisdiction over Campanian citizens; no Campanians should be forced to serve Carthage against his will; Capua retained its own government; and the 300 Roman prisoners handed over to Capua would be used in exchange for the 300 Campanian noblemen in Sicily.³²⁴ This agreement was definitely advantageous to Capua since under Roman rule Campanians, as Roman citizens were subject to the jurisdiction of Roman magistrates, but not allowed to vote at Roman elections or stand for office, plus military

³²² Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 23.4.7-8.

³²³ B. Catton, The Civil War, pages 33-34.

³²⁴ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 23.7.1-3.

service in the Roman army had become increasingly burdensome.³²⁵ The reaction from the Campanians was so positive that Livy recorded Hannibal's welcome as rapturous.³²⁶

The only city of any size to quickly go over to Carthage was Tarentum, and this was done through treachery.³²⁷ In most towns the upper classes remained loyal to Rome. Livy mentions this in connection with Nola in 216 and later with Croton, where he sites class division as; "One malady, so to speak, had attacked all the city-states of Italy, that the common people were at odds with the upper class, the senate inclining to the Romans, the common people drawing the state to the side of the Carthaginians."³²⁸ However, this statement was not the case in Locri, Arpi, and Tarentum where the commoners favoured Rome and the aristocracy Hannibal.³²⁹

In this regard note may be taken here of a pattern nearly as pervasive in the Mediterranean city-state world as the republican city-state itself: social tension and class conflict. Revolutions and civil wars within city-states were as common as wars between city-states. Of those cities whose histories we know in any detail, few were wholly exempt from it. Certainly Rome itself had its share of such internal disorders,³³⁰ and there is some indication that Carthage did as well.

Part of the reason for the Latin loyalty was undoubtedly because they knew they could become Roman citizens simply by immigrating to Roman territory. Indeed many

³²⁵ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 23.7.1-2.

³²⁶ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 23.10.13.

³²⁷ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 86.

³²⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 24.2.8. "Unus velut morbus invaserat omnes Italiae civitates ut plebes ab optimatibus dissentirent. senatus Romanis faveret, plebs ad Poenos rem traheret." Also, Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 23.14.7.

³²⁹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 23.30.8, 24.47.6, and 24.13.3.

³³⁰ Such as the repeated secession of the plebs at times when they felt, or were, oppressed.

Latins appear to have been descendants of Roman citizens who had presumably been prepared to join a Latin colony in the hope of a fresh start in a new home.

Further, Rome regularly supported and upheld oligarchies among its allies, which is not surprising since Rome was oligarchic.³³¹ It is a notable fact, then, that Hannibal seems to have made little or no effort to exploit the potential for generating internal dissension within Rome's allies – if not in Rome itself – by actively promoting democratic or populist factions, or by offering measures such as land reform that might play on social tensions. The failure to do so is perhaps more remarkable since there is evidence that the Barcas were associated with populist sympathies within Carthage – in one dispute there, Livy speaks of a minority including “A few, and these included nearly all the best men, supported Hanno,”³³² who were opposed by a pro-Barcid majority.

Hannibal might well have seen more to lose than to gain from such a radical political strategy. In the first place it would be difficult for the commander of an invading army to act on such a strategy. Local dissident aristocrats usually led ancient populist movements, and it would have been difficult, from a distance, to identify and make contact with potential dissident leaders. Moreover, Hannibal's political strategy relied upon allies voluntarily breaking from Rome – and the allied cities were themselves dominated by oligarchies. Even members of local “out” factions would for the most part be concerned with their own status and estates; if Hannibal identified his cause with social revolution he might only succeed in driving the oligarchic class throughout Italy into common cause with Rome. A social-revolutionary strategy, while potentially powerful, was both difficult to implement and highly risky. Given the apparently good

³³¹ Even though Rome might have been oligarchic, the plebs certainly had great power collectively.

³³² Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 22.4.1. “Pauci ac ferme optimus quisque Hannoni adsentiebantur, . . .”

chance of breaking up the Roman Alliance System without resorting to such a strategy, there was little reason for him to consider it.

To understand fully the unexpected strength of the Roman system, it becomes necessary to discuss the people who created it. In coming to grips with the Rome Hannibal fought, and the still earlier Romans who created that Rome, the Romans' self-projection of themselves as sturdy, rather plodding farmers creates a most misleading image of themselves and their city at the time of the 2nd Roman War. The impression left on the modern reader is that a much earlier Rome must have been hardly more than a village of rude huts. Thucydides devoted the better part of two books to the Athenian Sicilian expeditions without once mentioning Rome. According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the first references to Rome were by Hellanikos of Lesbos and Damastes of Sigeion, both younger contemporaries of Thucydides, but this was only in connection with the wanderings of Aeneas.³³³ It was only towards the end of the fourth century that Greek writers apparently began to take a serious interest in Rome. It is thereby surprising to discover that the Rome of the sixth century B.C., a Rome still ruled by its semi-legendary kings, was already one of the larger and richer cities of the contemporary Mediterranean world -- not perhaps to be compared with Periclean Athens a century later, but still a sizable town with a cosmopolitan, sophisticated culture.³³⁴

The clearest indication of the international political status of this early Rome comes from a source strikingly relevant to the 2nd Roman War: the first treaty of

³³³ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities, Vol. I, trans. E. Cary, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1937), 1.72.2, see also notes 4 and 6, page 237.

³³⁴ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities, 3.1.5.

friendship between Rome and Carthage as reported by Polybius.³³⁵ That treaty, contracted at the very beginning of the Republic, is more precisely the first known treaty between Republican Rome and Carthage. If Etruria dominated Rome in the latter part of its monarchy, Carthage may have made a treaty with the superior partner, in this case Etruria, and ignored Rome. While it is possible that only now did Carthage see any need to establish relations with Rome, it seems far more probable that they simply sought to reconfirm with the new republican government a relationship already established, whether by formal treaty or informally, with the previous kings.

The existence of a treaty does not make sixth-century Rome an equal to sixth-century Carthage, however it establishes an approximate lower limit for the power and influence of Rome: important enough that the Carthaginians thought it worth while to explicitly establish or, more probably, maintain friendly relations, and define mutual rights and restrictions.³³⁶ Such relations are not entered into with an obscure village or small town.

Of particular interest were the regulations concerning Roman and allied ships, which could not to pass beyond the "Fair Promontory" except if driven by storm or enemies, and if driven into port in the restricted area were to purchase only what they needed for repairs or sacrifices.³³⁷ Contrary to the image of the Romans as people who

³³⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.22 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 337-345.

³³⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.22; Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 7.27.2 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, Vol. IV, trans. B.O. Foster, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1926) 9.43.26.

³³⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.22.5-7 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 341-343.

knew nothing of the sea until forced by the 1st Roman War, these regulations clearly presume that the Romans had a significant foreign trade, carried in Roman ships.

The Carthaginians agreed not only to respect Roman territory, but also concede Rome a degree of protectorate over Latium as a whole.³³⁸ Carthaginian armed forces, their warships, were not to stay on Latin territory overnight, nor to seize any Latin city; but, in a slightly contradictory term, if they did capture one, they were to hand it over intact to the Romans. The overall picture offered by the treaty was of Rome as a substantial regional power whose dominance over the coast opposite the Carthaginian route between their holdings in Sicily and Sardinia was amicably acknowledged, and as a trading partner whose merchants enjoyed reciprocal rights to those of Carthaginian merchants in Rome. Since no alteration of previous relations was indicated, it may be inferred that the status of relations with the Republic remained essentially unchanged from that which had been maintained with the later kings.

Thus, Rome under the kings was already a rather large and cosmopolitan city of its time and a substantial regional power. This must be doubly stressed because of the widespread assumption that has grown up in modern times that, previous to the Republic, Rome was under Etruscan rule, dominance, or at the least it was the predominant cultural influence.³³⁹ This assumption is based in part on the fact that the material culture of the Romans at this time, as indicated by archaeological finds, was identical to that of the

³³⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 3.22.11-13 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 344-345.

³³⁹ T.J. Cornell, The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000-264 B.C.) (London, 1995), page 151. Rome had a tendency, similar to Carthage, but more so, of taking what they found to be better than they already had and making it their own. For example, the capture of the goddess Juno at Veii in 396, see Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 5.21ff.

Etruscans, in part on the evident Etruscan background of the Tarquinian kings, and in part on the presumption that in some way the Etruscans were the dominant power in central Italy in this period. However, the theory of an “Etruscan Rome” exaggerates the significance of these points, and flies squarely against the Rome’s own later traditions. That the material culture of the Romans matched that of the Etruscans is clear, but by no means so clear that this implies Etruscan cultural dominance, and still less overt political dominance. Etruscan influence on earlier Roman life may not have been any greater. Indeed, the Romans may not have so much borrowed Etruscan elements as been co-sharers in a material culture that was spread through much of Italy, and it had many borrowed, notably Greek, elements.³⁴⁰ Later Roman tradition provides no support for the notion that Rome was ever under Etruscan rule. The fall of Tarquinius Superbus is portrayed in Roman tradition as the overthrow of a domestic tyrant, not as a war of independence from foreign rule. To be sure, the historicity of the traditional account is uncertain; it is circumstantial and plausible, and has the flavour of a romanticized version of real events.³⁴¹

In whatever context the Roman monarchy actually began – the further back we go the more legendary the flavour of what we are told – there is a possibility that by its later stages the kingship had evolved toward “proto-republican” lifetime magistracy.³⁴² Several features point in this direction, its non-hereditary and quasi-elective character, and institutions such as the formal interregnum between reigns. Toward the end, especially with the last king, Tarquinius Superbus, the kingship took on the character of a

³⁴⁰ T.J. Cornell, The Beginnings of Rome, pages 163-165.

³⁴¹ Tacitus, The Histories, trans. C.H. Moore, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1925), 3.72.

³⁴² T.J. Cornell, The Beginnings of Rome, page 238.

contemporary Greek tyranny-extra constitutional, popular anti-aristocracy, asserting itself with dramatic public works and an aggressive foreign policy.³⁴³

Whatever exactly led to Tarquinius Superbus' ouster, the kingship was abolished and an oligarchic republic set in place. Since the Romans never had a written constitution, their form of government, especially from 287 B.C. with the passage of the *lex Hortensia* has been a favourite topic of discussion and argument from Polybius to the present day. Polybius' interest lay in its approximating the ideal of a "mixed" constitution or balanced blend of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy,³⁴⁴ though the mix was heavily slanted toward oligarchy. Many of its features resemble those of other republics, but the most striking feature of the Roman political system was its flexibility. They achieved this flexibility through accretion. Polybius believed this system culminated in the Valerio-Horatian Laws of 449 B.C. From that moment, Polybius tells us, the Roman political system continued to progress, until it reached perfection at the time of the 2nd Roman War.³⁴⁵ The Romans did not respond to new situations and requirements by wholesale restructuring of their basic law, as exemplified by the Athenian constitutional reforms of Solon and Kleisthenes; instead, new institutions were added as needed, and the role of existing ones altered. A system of checks and balances evolved under the impetus of a struggle between two social classes, the patricians and plebians, occurring primarily during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Thus, the *comitia curiata*, an ancient body

³⁴³ T.J. Cornell, The Beginnings of Rome, pages 145-146.

³⁴⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 6.3.5-8; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 638-641 & A. Lintott, The Constitution of the Roman Republic (Oxford, 1999), pages 16-26 and 214-219.

³⁴⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 6.11.1.

dating back to the regal period, survived in vestigial form into the late republic,³⁴⁶ the tribunate of the plebs, originally the result of a sort of general strike,³⁴⁷ evolved into one of the regular institutions of government. In essence the Roman form of government roughly parallels the American division of executive, legislative, and judicial branches, although the Senate does not fit neatly into any of these categories.

The evolution of the Roman Senate is even more notable. Initially a shadowy ad-hoc body of advisors composed of the heads of patrician families,³⁴⁸ it evolved into an effective governing assembly composed of 600 magistrates and ex-magistrates who served for life unless expelled by the censors. Although technically an advisory body, in effect the Senate was the chief governmental body because it controlled public finances and foreign affairs, assigned military commands and provinces, and debated and passed decrees that would be submitted to the assemblies for final ratification.³⁴⁹ As the only permanent governing body and the only body where debate was possible, the Senate had by far the greatest social prestige. The hereditary nature of the Senate led to the perpetuation of factional interests, represented by three powerful family clans: the *Fabii*; the *Claudii*; and the *Aemilii*. The *Fabii* maintained a policy of cooperation with Carthage in favour of northern expansion, while the *Claudii* regarded Carthage as a rival halting Rome's expansionism in the south that should be eliminated. The *Aemilii* were less discriminate in their overseas expansion policies.

³⁴⁶ A. Momigliano, "An Interim Report on the Origins of Rome", *Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 53 (1963), pages 12-14 and A. Lintott, The Constitution of the Roman Republic, page 49.

³⁴⁷ T.J. Cornell, The Beginnings of Rome, page 265.

³⁴⁸ T.J. Cornell, The Beginnings of Rome, page 247-248.

³⁴⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 6.13-16.

The legislative branch was made up of three citizen assemblies that included the entire electorate. Although the assemblies were theoretically composed of all males who were full Roman citizens, individuals had to attend in person in order to vote. No debate from the floor was possible and votes were counted in groups rather than individually. The earliest assembly, *comitia curiata*, became obsolete as a legislative body and had mostly ceremonial functions while the *comitia centuriata* became the most important. These elected 193 centuries, based on wealth and age, elected censors and magistrates with imperium (consuls and praetors), declared war, passed some laws, and served as the highest court of appeal in cases involving capital punishment. The *comitia tributa*, composed of thirty-five tribes originally determined geographically then passed on by birth, formed initially for election of the lower magistrates (tribunes, aediles, and quaestors) and eventually became chief law-making body.

The executive branch of the Roman government consisted of the elected magistrates. Once the founders of the Republic had rid Rome of the Tarquins, Livy indicates the kingship was replaced with a curious institution of “collegiality” in which two men shared supreme power as consuls.³⁵⁰ Polybius had written that L. Junius Brutus and M. Horatius were “the first consuls, after the expulsion of the kings, and the founders of Jupiter Capitolinus.”³⁵¹ He further indicates the date was thirty-two years from the time Xerxes crosses to Greece.³⁵² If Polybius is referring to the crossing of Xerxes to Greece as the year of Salamis in 480/479 B.C., this would date the first consuls to 512/511 B.C.

³⁵⁰ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 3.55.12.

³⁵¹ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.22.1-2.

³⁵² Polybius, *The Histories*, 6.11.1.

The consuls elected by the *comitia centuriata*, held office for a one-year period.³⁵³ As the chief magistrates they convened and presided over the Senate and assemblies, initiated and administered legislation, served as generals in military campaigns, and represented Rome in foreign affairs.³⁵⁴ They were however accountable for their stewardship on leaving office. Moreover, being a pair, they were subject to one another's veto even in times of battle. Consuls could appoint or serve as dictator for up to six months in times of emergency. Often when a consul completed his term of office, he governed a province as a proconsul, most often ruling provinces requiring a large military force.

Other offices of the executive branch include eight praetors, two censors, four aediles, and ten tribunes. Praetors served primarily as governors, administering the civil laws of Rome; they also served with military commands. Ex-praetors governed less significant provinces as propraetors. Censors, elected every five years, conducted census, enrolled new citizens, and reviewed the roll of the Senate and equestrians.³⁵⁵ For supervision of religious festivals, public games, temples, upkeep of the city, regulation of marketplaces, and the grain supply for the city of Rome, the aediles were elected. Two were required to be plebeians, and the other two could come from either order. All of the ten tribunes had to be plebeian since the office was established to protect the plebeians from arbitrary actions of magistrates. They could veto the act of any magistrate or stop any official act of administration.³⁵⁶

³⁵³ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 2.1.8.

³⁵⁴ Polybius, *The Histories*, 6.12.

³⁵⁵ Polybius, *The Histories*, 6.17.

³⁵⁶ Polybius, *The Histories*, 6.16.

The evolving Roman constitution is a demonstration of Roman flexibility and creativity in the development of their system of political control throughout Italy. Although its general form resembled other systems of domination through unequal alliances, its distinctive features contributed to a resilience that Hannibal failed to appreciate. To grasp those distinctive features it is necessary to give a very abbreviated account of its development.

The Roman kings had exercised predominance throughout Latium, as indicated by the terms of the first republican treaty with Carthage, which simply reconfirmed the prior relationship. The turbulence that surrounded the change of regime in Rome, though, encouraged the Latins, or some of them, to attempt to shake off Roman domination. By the time things settled down, however, Rome had re-established a limited predominance. Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes the terms agreed upon by the Romans and the Latins and ratified by oaths and sacrifices:

“ ‘Let there be peace between the Romans and all the Latin cities as long as the heavens and the earth shall remain where they are. Let them neither make war upon one another themselves nor bring in foreign enemies nor grant a safe passage to those who shall make war upon either. Let them assist one another, when warred upon, with all their forces, and let each have an equal share of the spoils and booty taken in their common wars. Let suits relating to private contracts be determined within ten days, and in the nation where the contract was made. And let it not be permitted to add anything to, or take anything away from these treaties except by the consent both of the Romans and of all the Latins.’”³⁵⁷

³⁵⁷ Dionysios of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, Vol. IV. trans. E. Cary, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1940), 6.95.2.

“Ῥωμαῖοις καὶ ταῖς λατινῶν πόλεσιν ἀπασαῖς εἰρήνῃ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔστω, μέχρις ἀν οὐρανός

A Latin League, although it did not include Rome, was tied to Rome by an alliance.³⁵⁸ They annexed conquered territories and made new Latin states or Latin colonies settled by a mixture of Romans and Latins.³⁵⁹ Although the system was not very different from many other systems of unequal treaties and local ethnic leagues by which powerful cities dominated their immediate co-ethnic neighbours, while the Latin League remained in being, Rome – though by far the leading city of Latium – did not become a member of it, and was free to enter other treaties and alliances not involving the Latins.

While Philip II of Macedonia was expanding his empire, war in Italy erupted on the plains of Campania, near Neapolis. When the Samnite warrior-herdsmen invaded the inhabitants of the plains, the plains inhabitants sought help from Rome, resulting in war between Rome and the Samnite hill people – the First Samnite War. The war lasted two years, ending with Roman victory in 345; however, the Samnites display of military weakness encouraged Rome's Latin allies to make forays against them. When the Samnites called for Rome to control its allies, some Latins resented Rome's interference; others were convinced Rome intended to dominate all of Latium. Member states within Rome's Latin League demanded equality with Rome and a share in governing Rome

τε και γη την αυτην στασιν εχωσι· και μητ' αυτοι πολεμειτωσαν προς αλληλους μητ' αλλοθεν πολεμιους επαγετωσαν, μητε τοις επιφερουσι πολεμον οδους παρεχετωσαν ασφαλεις, βοηθειτωσαν τε τοις πολεμουμενοις απαση δυναμει, λαφυρων τε και λειας της εκ πολεμων κοινων το ισον λαγχανετωσαν μερος εκατεροι· των τε ιδιωτικων συμβολαιων αι κρισεις εν ημεραις γινεσθωσαν δεκα, παρ' οις αν γενηται το συμβολαιον. ταις δε συνθηκαις ταυταις μηδεν εξεστω προσθειναι μηδ' αφελειν απ' αυτων ο τι αν μη 'Ρωμαιοις τε και Λατινοις απασι δοκη.'"

See also, K. Lomas, Roman Italy 338 B.C.-AD 200: A Sourcebook, pages 42-43.

³⁵⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 2.33.9.

³⁵⁹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 3.1.8 & Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities, Vol. VI, trans. E. Cary. Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), 9.59.2.

itself. In 241 many of the Latins rebelled against Rome – a sure sign of the instability of alliance systems and not the first time various Latins had done so.³⁶⁰

A decisive turn came with Rome's victory. After the Romans put down the rebellion, they instituted some modest changes that proved to have sweeping effects. They abolished the Latin League; henceforth the Latin states had treaty relations only individually with Rome, which provided a variety of reciprocal rights for citizens of each party -- but not with each other. Soon, the Romans began to make treaties granting the same reciprocal rights to other cities who became "Latin" regardless of ethnicity. Other treaties granted varying status to the partner state and its citizens, until in effect the Romans had a series of gradations of status available in their relations with various allies.³⁶¹ Because all of these treaties, like the new Latin treaties, were with Rome only,³⁶² the Roman Alliance System was not encumbered with any leagues or federations whose collective assent might be required for, and thus restrain, action on Rome's part. At the same time, the gradations of status provided a system of rewards and punishments that Rome could hold out to its allies. A rebellious city that failed in its obligations, stood the risk of being degraded to a less favourable status; a city who stood by Rome in a tough spot had the opportunity to be rewarded with a more favourable status.

Rome now dominated all the Latins, and controlled an area from just north of Rome southward almost to Neapolis. This was a heavily populated area for ancient times, and the base from which Rome would spread its power and influence over the whole of Italy.

³⁶⁰ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 6.21.2.

³⁶¹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 8.11.16, 8.13.8, and 8.17.11.

³⁶² Rome's allies were not typically permitted to make treaties with foreign powers or even with each other.

Hostilities resumed in 327 between the Samnite hill people and the inhabitants of Campania's plain. Once again the plain's inhabitants sought Rome's assistance, and once again Rome went to war against the Samnites. After a Roman and allied force surrendered at Caudine Forks, the war stalled for five years. As Rome waited for the war to resume, the military strengthened through increased recruitment. And in 320/319, the Romans returned for revenge against the Samnites and defeated them in what Livy describes as one of the greatest events in Roman history.³⁶³ Although peace was established between Rome and some Samnite towns, the war dragged on with others until 311, when the several Etruscan cities joined the Samnites in a showdown against Roman power. The war subsequently became a contest for the dominance over much of Italy. Between 311 and 304, the Romans and their allies won a series of victories against both the Etruscans and the Samnites. When the Samnites sued for peace, the Romans demanded inspections for assurance, which lasted until 298.

At the turn of the century, the Samnites tried again to thwart Rome's domination of Italy by organizing a coalition that included the Etruscans and Gauls. Again the war began again on the plains near Neapolis. When the Romans saw the Etruscans and Gauls in northern Italy joined by the Samnites they were alarmed. Previously, the Romans had benefited from a lack of coordination among its enemies, but now Rome faced them all at once. Some relief came with a victory in the south, but the crucial battle for Italy took place in 295 at Sentinum, a town in Italy's northeast, where more troops were engaged than any previous battle in Italy. At first Rome gave way before an attack by the Gauls then rallied, crushing both the Samnites and the Gauls. Afterwards the war slowly wound down, coming to an end in 282 with Rome dominating all of the Italian peninsula except

³⁶³ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 9.1-14.

for the Greek cities in Italy's extreme south and the Po valley, which was still occupied by the Gauls.

In 280 B.C. as the war was winding down, the Greek city of Tarentum, on Italy's southern coast, became disturbed by a colony that Rome had established just eighty miles to its north. Tarentum had its own sphere of influence in the south. It had a democratic constitution, the largest naval fleet in Italy, an army of 15,000, and wealth enough to buy a good number of mercenaries. It had ignored the opportunity to join the Etruscans, Gauls, and Samnites in their war against Rome, but belatedly decided to fight Rome. Tarentum gained the backing of the Epirote king Pyrrhus, who agreed to command the combined troops of Tarentum and other Greek cities in Italy, along with his own troops.

When Tarentum requested his help, the opportunity to extend his authority over Italy as Alexander had planned was too great to pass. However, Pyrrhus underestimated Rome. In 280, he landed 25,000 troops in Italy, including some 3,000 horsemen, 2,000 archers, and the first elephants brought to Italy. When he engaged the Romans in battle at Heraclea, he used the elephants to drive through Roman lines, creating panic among the Roman soldiers. Although Pyrrhus won many battles against the Romans, his victories came with enormous casualties, giving rise to the expression "Pyrrhic victory".³⁶⁴

Pyrrhus also tried to win over some of Rome's allies, without success; Rome's manpower proved too much for him. Hannibal, aware of Pyrrhus' strategy and tactics during his campaigns against Rome, assumed he could accomplish what Pyrrhus had been unable to do – cause a break in the Roman Alliance System, by absolute crushing victories.

³⁶⁴ Pyrrhus' famous remark in Plutarch of, "If we are victorious in one more battle with the Romans, we shall be utterly destroyed," reflects this sentiment. Plutarch, Parallel Lives, Pyrrhus, 21.9 and P. Garoufalas. Pyrrhus: King of Epirus (London, 1979). page 93.

By 275 Rome defeated Pyrrhus. He returned to Greece and was killed in 272, the same year Tarentum surrendered to Rome. Rome treated the defeated city with leniency, allowing Tarentum the same local self-rule it allowed other cities. Tarentum in turn recognized Rome's hegemony in Italy and became another of Rome's allies, while a Roman garrison remained in the city to insure loyalty. Rome now became undisputed master of the lower three quarters of the Italian peninsula.

The social makeup, the oligarchic bias of the system contributed to its cohesiveness. Under ancient conditions an extended political order was easier to construct on an oligarchic foundation because the rich tended to have greater geographical horizons and wider connections than the poor, and individual legal rights provided for in the various forms of alliances became relevant. A small farmer in Capua was unlikely to be interested in rights of trade with Rome or intermarrying with a Roman, rights he would unlikely ever wish to exercise. A large landowner, however, might want to do both – and would find it easier to enter such relations with Romans than with other Campanians from a different city.

Add to these factors the openness of Rome itself. The tradition of Rome as a mixed community open to outsiders was as old as the city itself, as conveyed by the “rape of the Sabine women”; indeed older, at least in retrospect, as embodied in the myth of Aeneas.³⁶⁵ In this the Romans were opposite to the traditional exclusiveness of the Greeks.

A further attribute of the Roman system, one of particularly immediate concern to Hannibal, was that it was a system geared for war. The Roman confederacy consisted of a variety of states bound to Rome through over 150 differing treaties and alliances with one

³⁶⁵ T.J. Cornell, The Beginnings of Rome, page 430, note 27 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 1.9 for a full account.

common requirement: to supply men or supplies for Rome's army. The availability of Italian manpower gave the Roman state vast military potential, plus the capacity to absorb heavy losses. This meant Rome could use war as an instrument of policy with little risk. Since the alliance had a purely military function, they were only valuable to Rome during times of war; therefore, the Romans needed to engage in warfare if they wanted to keep the system intact. Momigliano observed that the Romans:

“...passed from war to war without giving thought to the very metaphysical question of whether the wars were meant to gain power for Rome or to keep the allies busy. Wars were the very essence of the Roman organisation. The battle of Sentinum was the natural prelude to the battle of Pydna - or even to the destruction of Corinth and the Social War.”³⁶⁶

It follows that the Roman conquest was the result of efficient exploitation of the resources of the allies. The allies had to bear the burden of the wars of conquest, and a substantial share of the risks. In particular, they incurred a proportion of the cost, since they were obliged to pay for their contingents out of their own resources.³⁶⁷ In this way the Romans were able to tax the allies without imposing a direct tribute, and to fight wars at a relatively low cost to them. For their part the allies were evidently prepared to accept this state of things, and remained consistently loyal to Rome.

The Romans could count on the support of the propertied classes in the allied states, who turned naturally to Rome whenever their local interests were threatened. On several occasions Rome intervened with military force to defend local aristocracies against popular insurrections. In return they received the cooperation of the ruling classes

³⁶⁶ A. Momigliano, Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization (Cambridge, 1975), pages 45-6.

³⁶⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 6.21.4 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 701.

of the allied states -- an arrangement that insured their continuing loyalties even in times of crisis.³⁶⁸ Additionally as military partners with Rome they gained a share of the profits of successful warfare. This was a standard clause in all treaties and applied to confiscated land as well as tangible material, which Rome shared equally between with her allies as a matter of course from defeated enemies. They used confiscated land for colonization and distribution to individuals. Land allotments included non-Roman Italians, Latins and allies, as well as Roman citizens.³⁶⁹

Many of the allies had been defeated in war then compelled to join the Roman Alliance. Future allied participation in the settlement of conquered territories was directly connected with the Roman's practice of confiscation of land from conquered states. Through joining a large and efficient operation, while sacrificing their political independence, Rome's Italian allies obtained security, protection and profit. The Roman Alliance System has been compared to a criminal operation, which compensates its victims by including them in the gang and inviting them to share in the proceeds of future robberies.³⁷⁰ Rome drew no tribute from its subject-allies fighting men and supplies for troops, the direct source of income the system provided, the seizure of land from defeated enemies, was also dependent on war. In the words of Cornell:

“For most of its history the Roman Republic was constantly at war, and a very high proportion of its citizen manpower was committed to military service. Its

³⁶⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 10.3.1-2ff.

³⁶⁹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 34.42.5-6.

³⁷⁰ E.J. Bicherman and M. Smith, The Ancient History of Western Civilization (New York, 1976), page 149.

institutions were military in character and function, and its culture was pervaded by a warlike ethos”.³⁷¹

The same characterization could be used to describe Sparta, yet while the Spartans were constrained by their system, theirs multiplied the Romans’ freedom of action. As the price of exceptional capacity for war the Spartans cut themselves off from the larger worlds, and both their society and their power base proved incapable of growing beyond narrow limits. In contrast the Romans opened themselves to the world – and began successfully to absorb a growing portion of it. Rome, like Athens in its richness and variety, had something more to offer than the mere security of subjection.

The Roman system and the attitudes infused by it were in place for some four generations prior to the outbreak of the 2nd Roman War. Over time, its effect must have been to gradually break down city-state particularism across Italy without undermining the city-state identity of Rome itself. Ultimately, by the time of the Social War, the process had gone far enough that the allies revolted not to restore their ancient independence, but to demand fuller rights from Rome.

As noted previously in this chapter, Hannibal sent scouts and envoys into Gaul, and even across the Alps into Cisalpine Gaul, to prepare his line of march; however, he underestimated the impact when Rome granted citizenship to those allies who did not rebel, or to those who abandoned the rebellion.³⁷² Except for Roman colonies, the people in other parts of Italy did not at all think of themselves as Romans. Yet it is probable that enough personal ties had been formed between Rome and members of the elite in other cities to form an invisible brake against rebellion. People who had friends or relations in Rome were less likely to turn or make common cause with an alien intruder for the sake

³⁷¹ T.J. Cornell, The Beginnings of Rome, page 365.

³⁷² L. Keppie, The Making of the Roman Army: From the Republic to Empire (New York, 1984), page 68.

of a traditional independence. Plus we are given no evidence that he actively collected any political intelligence about Roman Italy itself. Even if he did so, the sort of intelligence he would have been able to gather might not have been sufficient. The full resilience of the Roman system perhaps could only be appreciated by extensive personal experience in Italy.³⁷³

Long established, the Roman system provided rewards for loyalty as well as punishments for disloyalty, and fostered the growth of personal ties that tended to gradually weaken city-state particularism. Such particularism was by no means extinct, and some cities did rebel, but the centripetal force acting to encourage a breakup of the Roman system was weaker than Hannibal must have anticipated, and the cohesive forces holding it together were stronger. In choosing a politico-military strategy of breaking up the Roman Alliance System, Hannibal chose a more difficult task than he anticipated.

Disposition of Hannibal's Troops Before the March

The landlocked interior of the Iberian Peninsula situated on a high plateau, known as the Meseta was originally inhabited by people of mostly Celtic origin. Upon encountering them as a contingent in Hannibal's army, the Romans named them Celtiberians, meaning 'Celts who live in Iberia'. Hamilcar transformed the Celtiberians into excellent troops, further expanding the political power of the Barcas in Spain. In areas under Barcid control native recruits were conscripted into the army; in outlying areas they were enticed to join with the promise of payment. Supplementing his Spanish forces with seasoned African ground troops and horsemen, Hamilcar established an

³⁷³ However, it is possible Hannibal did understand all there was to learn from spies and simply underestimated the Romans in their tenacity. It is known that a Carthaginian spy had been operating in Rome for at least two years when he was caught in 217 B.C.. Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.33.1 and N.J.E. Austin and N.B. Rankov, Exploratio, page 93. See also, T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, page 164.

unprecedented Carthaginian army. They were able to remain virtually independent of the political control of Carthage; eventually, the troops in Spain owed their allegiance to the Barca family rather than Carthage itself. This allegiance gave Hamilcar and upon his death his son-in-law, Hasdrubal, the ability and power to pursue their own cause. The stability and strength of their rule from 238-221 B.C. resulted in virtual independence from Carthage, establishing an unopposed succession of Hannibal in 221 B.C.³⁷⁴

Many of the older generation remembered the Roman invasion of Carthage during the first war with Rome and feared another assault on their homeland. To alleviate their fears, “these troops were to be a garrison for Carthage, a part to be distributed through the country” by posting 15,000 cavalry and infantry recruited from Spanish tribes in exchange for an equal number of African soldiers.³⁷⁵ From Africa, he brought 11,850 Libyan infantry, supported by 2,550 cavalry, together with a force of 300 Ligurian targeters, 500 Balearic slingers and 21 elephants to Spain and placed them under his brother, Hasdrubal’s command. In addition to this land force he also left Hasdrubal a substantial navy as described previously. Hannibal purposely sent recruits from the Spanish tribes to guard Carthage and African troops to guard Spain, thereby minimizing the chances of revolt among the soldiers.³⁷⁶ With these strategic plans he secured Africa and Spain and could concentrate on preparations for his invasion of Italy.

To fully comprehend the task before Hannibal, a look at the Confederacy’s troops prior to the outset of the War Between the States and Lee’s actions are especially pertinent. Upon taking command of the Army of Northern Virginia, General Lee’s first

³⁷⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 2.1 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 151-153.

³⁷⁵ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.21.13 & Polybius, The Histories, 3.34.1.

³⁷⁶ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.22.

task was to prepare Virginia to repel an invasion by the Union army. Knowing a rapid mobilization was essential he established a training camp and an artillery school. As officers resigned from the U.S. army and reported for duty, he assigned them to command the new units in preparation for battle. In a matter of months he built an army from nothing. A.L. Long gave this description of Lee's accomplishment: "Such was his wonderful talent for organization that in the space of two months he was able to equip for the field sixty regiments of infantry and cavalry, besides numerous batteries of artillery, making an aggregate of nearly 50,000 men"³⁷⁷ By staying focused and disciplined both Hannibal and Lee made sure their men were properly trained and equipped and were able to bring their armies to maximum performance rapidly when required.

Hannibal's sound strategic preparations bear all the characteristics of careful groundwork. Hannibal sent envoys to Gaul to secure passage; he took the precaution of sending Spanish troops to Africa and Africans to Spain;³⁷⁸ he entrusted the protection of Spain to his brother during his absence.³⁷⁹ With Spain safeguarded and his agents returning from Italy with favourable reports, he began to reassemble troops from their winter quarters in the last weeks of May. When he heard the news of the Carthaginian senate's response to the Roman ultimatum that he and his officers be surrendered,³⁸⁰ he was able to use their support to his advantage. In 218 B.C. Hannibal left Carthago Nova for Italy with an army of nearly 100,000 men – 90,000 foot and 12,000 cavalry from

³⁷⁷ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 142.

³⁷⁸ This is precisely what the Romans did during the Empire to prevent troops from rebelling.

³⁷⁹ J. Peddie, Hannibal's War, page 11 & J. Prevas, Hannibal Crosses the Alps, pages 54-55.

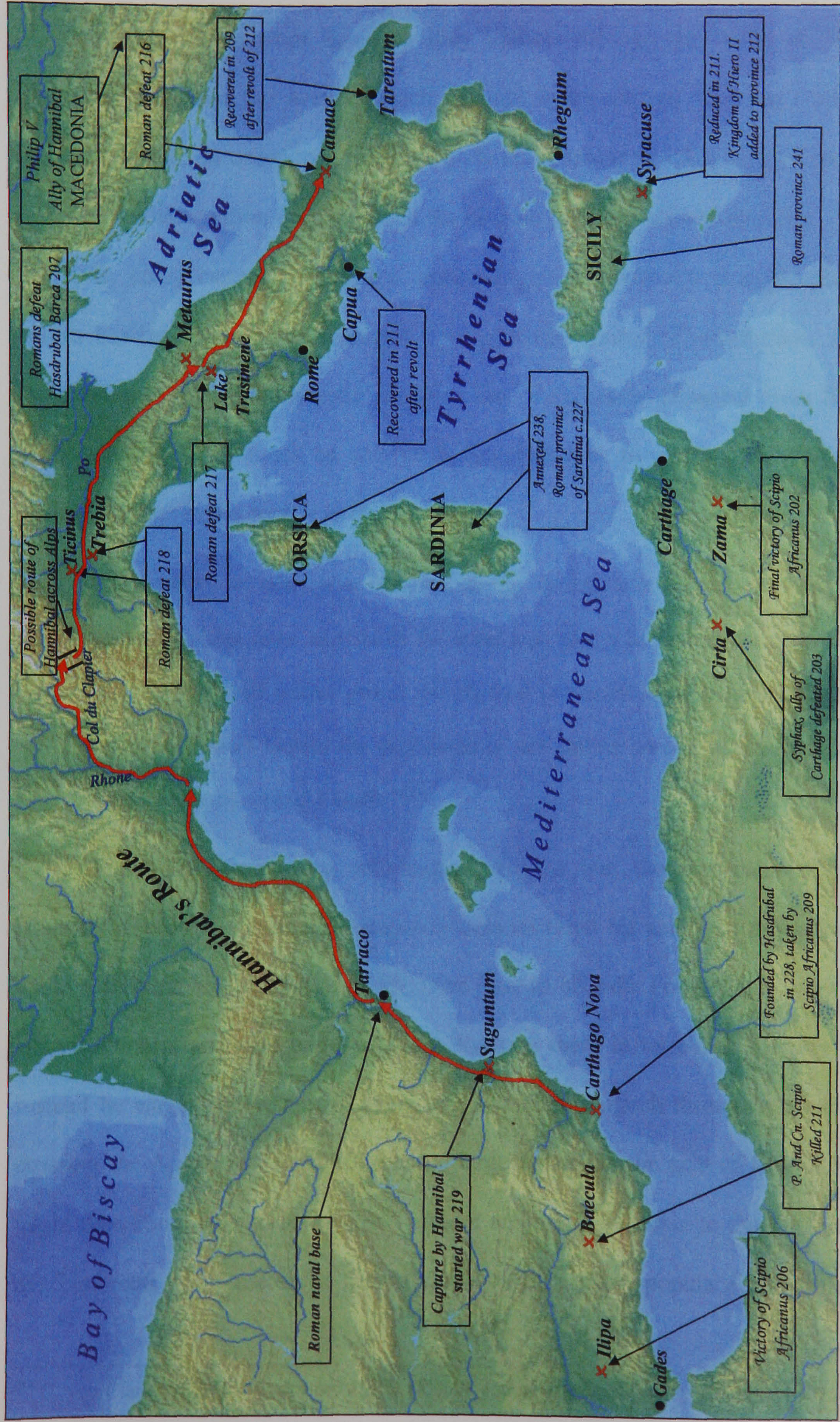
³⁸⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 3.34.8.

Africa³⁸¹ – plus, a contingent of thirty-seven war elephants with their handlers.³⁸² There were loyal veterans who had served with Hannibal, as well as Hasdrubal; however, the majority were mercenaries who owed allegiance to no one. They were men who fought for plunder; the prospect of unlimited spoils the only tie that bound them. It was a mixed force of many races and languages;³⁸³ Hannibal's ability to mold these disparate troops into a disciplined, loyal fighting force is by far one of his crowning achievements. The following chapter will more closely examine the complexity of Hannibal's troops beginning with their departure from Carthago Nova through the battle of Cannae and further explain the breakdown and failure of his first strategy.

³⁸¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.35.1 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 366.

³⁸² Appian, Roman History: Hannibalic War, trans. H. White, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1912), 1.4.

³⁸³ A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, pages 153-154; J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 32-33 & L. Cottrell, Hannibal, pages 25-28, though interestingly he lists, "heavy, unwieldy siege engines, battering rams and storming-towers" as being brought on the march to Italy. This is incorrect as Hannibal did not take any siege equipment of any kind, except the elephants themselves.



Hannibal's March

Chapter III

As the march from Spain to Italy unfolds through the battle of Cannae, this chapter will discuss the events, which provide indications of Hannibal's strategic and tactical thinking. In order to highlight the changing aspects to Hannibal's thoughts as he responds to the situation on the ground the chapter proceeds chronologically.

In many cases, the practical applicability of Hannibal's strategic placement of battles has been somewhat neglected as a potential source of information. As the war progresses, it becomes blatantly obvious that occasionally Hannibal risks battle at all costs while at other times he will go to great lengths to avoid such. Clausewitz, for example, writes in his book, *On War*:

“If therefore we hear about Hannibal having offered battle to Fabius in vain, that tells us nothing more as regards the latter than that a battle was not part of his plan, and in itself neither proves the physical nor moral superiority of Hannibal; but with respect to him the expression is still correct enough in the sense that Hannibal really wished a battle.”³⁸⁴

It is clear from what information remains that the placement of the battles Hannibal desired is significant because it demonstrated his ability to defeat the Romans while protecting any allies who might come over to his side. For example, why did he not wait in Umbria and give battle with the Romans there in terrain of his own choosing? Instead he wages the battle of Lake Trasimene after a march through a marsh and after crossing the Apennines. First, if he had a large victory in the area of Etruria those cities might then come over to his side and present an immediate threat to the Romans; whereas the Umbrians were merely a distant threat with a small populace and little potential

³⁸⁴ C. von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. J.J. Graham (London, 1982), originally published in 1832, page 328.

military might.³⁸⁵ Next, he could exploit any weaknesses the Roman consuls may have by taking the offensive stance rather than a defensive posture; always insuring he took the battles to them and not vice versa. Perhaps because, “to probe for the weaknesses of one’s opponent,” according to Polybius, with “less emphasis on the physical aspects and more on the psychological and moral defects of the enemy leadership. Those are the weaknesses which lead to mistakes being made by an opponent during a campaign and the efficient and imaginative commander can turn them to his own advantage.”³⁸⁶ This is especially true of Hannibal for he accomplished undeniably turned the enemies weaknesses to his advantage.

On the other hand, it can also be seen that Hannibal’s actions prior to the battle of Lake Trasimene is drastically at variance with those after the Battle of Cannae. We shall investigate his movements after Cannae later in this chapter. The theoretical element behind the information covered in this section of the study will be used to demonstrate how Hannibal came to believe ultimately that his initial strategy would not work and a new one, which would be very different, was needed.

Manpower³⁸⁷

As the study points out in the previous chapter, Hannibal sought to undermine Rome’s military might by destroying the political confederation linking the Republic with

³⁸⁵ This did not occur, but 10 years later it is known many of the Etruscan cities were on the verge of changing sides.

³⁸⁶ N.J.E. Austin & N.B. Rankov, Exploratio, page 14; Polybius, The Histories, 3.81 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 413.

³⁸⁷ For more on the troops available to Hannibal before the March, see L. Cottrell, Hannibal, pages 20-30 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal’s War, pages 29-34. For an excellent comparison of the available troops to Hannibal and Rome, see D. Head, Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars 359 B.C. to 146 B.C. (1982), pages 33-41.

her Latin allies. But how did he imagine the defection of Rome's allies might benefit his ultimate goal? The idea that he could never muster the quantity of manpower available to Rome through the allied treaties that provided Rome with military units is fact. He had planned before ever leaving Spain to greatly diminish Rome's vast manpower advantage by detaching these allies from their political allegiance. It is important to note that Hannibal needed to replenish his troops from the local population and the defection of Rome's allies was crucial to his strategy.

The total population of Carthage at the start of the 2nd Roman War is estimated at one million people, while Polybius cites Rome's military strength in figures of more than 700,000 infantry and 70,000 cavalry for service in 225 B.C., with 250,000 allied citizens available for infantry and 23,000 for the cavalry. Similarly by 1860 the Union states were far more populous than the Confederate states with over 22 million people recorded. Of these 22 million the Union held over 4 million men of combat age. According to carefully kept government records, the Union army consisted of 2.2 million soldiers with almost an equal number of men to call on in reserve.³⁸⁸ The Roman numbers show "... what a great power it was that Hannibal ventured to attack..."³⁸⁹ Yet attack he did in spite of the knowledge that Roman strength in terms of manpower closely matched Carthage's total population. A look at the complexity of Hannibal's army, the numbers involved during the course of the war, and the subsequent allied troops who joined him as the war proceeded through the Battle of Cannae will show just how well he accomplished his goal.

³⁸⁸ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 8.

³⁸⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 2.24.1.

"... των εργαων ηλικιος 'Αννιβας ετολμησε πραγμασιν επιθεσαι [μετα δε ταυτα]..." & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 196-199.

Hannibal was certainly one of the most remarkable military geniuses in history and not least remarkable as a leader of an overwhelmingly mercenary army. Carthaginian armies were composed essentially of mercenaries commanded by professional officers, usually native Carthaginians. While historically the army displayed an amazing diversity of nationalities, Hannibal led an army consisting of at least half a dozen nationalities, each with its own distinctive way of fighting, language, customs, and character. He knew the strengths and weaknesses of each group and turned these undisciplined and individualistic tribesmen into effective units capable of fighting in coordination with troops of other nationalities. Throughout the war Hannibal showed remarkable skills in understanding his opponents' psychology, concern for his own troops, the ability to use different troops to his best advantage, and the readiness to use unusual tactics.³⁹⁰ Although some historians claim that mercenary armies were necessarily less committed and less cohesive than citizen militias, there is little evidence for it. In fact Hannibal exploited the diversity of his multiracial army to defeat the homogenous citizen and allied forces of his enemy. Later as the war wore on Rome even had problems with twelve of the Latin colonies supplying their required contingents.³⁹¹

The evidence suggests of Hannibal's African troops, the Libyphoenicians (the term first used to mean Phoenician settlers in Libya, later it was used for half-breed Libyans who had adopted the Carthaginian culture) formed the most important element among the infantry. He drew these from Carthage's African provinces and they formed the *phalanx*, which was the core of the striking force of the infantry. It is more than likely that they were pikemen and carried lighter lance-like weapons. The Celts and Iberians

³⁹⁰ S. Yalichev, Mercenaries of the Ancient World (London, 1997), page 235.

³⁹¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.9. The twelve colonies were: Ardea, Nepete, Sutrium, Alba, Carseoli, Sora, Suessa, Circeii, Setia, Cales, Narnia, and Interamna.

formed the bulk of the infantry at Cannae, with the Celts coming into Hannibal's army in 218. Their quality was variable; although individually brave, they were generally found unreliable.³⁹² The ancient sources give us the impression that Hannibal used them as pilum fodder. Apparently the Spanish tactics were much like those of the Roman infantry; they discharged a shower of throwing spears and then followed up with their short swords. One of the most critical of Hannibal's light troops was the Balearic slingers, who armed with three types of sling for employment at different ranges, were capable of inflicting a great deal of damage to the enemy and deemed more useful than archers.

Nevertheless it is clear that Hannibal's cavalry led by the Numidians – the most remarkable light horsemen of ancient times – and the Spanish proved to be the dominating feature of his army.³⁹³ The Numidians led remounts into battle and changed horses when one tired, while the Spanish heavy cavalry commonly rode two men to a horse with one rider dismounting to fight on foot.³⁹⁴ Hannibal often used the Numidians' idiosyncratic fighting methods to engage the Romans and draw them out as at Trebia. At Cannae, he groups the Celtic and Spanish horse, recruited among the nobles and their retainers. By the time of battle it is clear that Hannibal had succeeded in welding together these disparate horsemen into a highly trained body of cavalry.

For an indication of how the effective use of cavalry can assist in the planning and execution of a military offensive, we need to consider the use of cavalry during the War Between the States. Just as Carthage had an overwhelmingly superior cavalry when

³⁹² See L. Rawlings, "Celts, Spaniards, and Samnites: Warriors in a Soldiers' War", *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal*, BICS Supplement 67, 1996, pages 86-92 for a description of the Celtic and Spanish mindset in battles.

³⁹³ D. Head, Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars 359 B.C. to 146 B.C., pages 34-36.

³⁹⁴ A. Lloyd, Destroy Carthage, page 136.

compared to Rome, for the first half of the War Between the States, the Confederate cavalry proved infinitely superior to the Union.³⁹⁵ Early on the Confederacy organized their cavalry into an independent autonomous unit. Given this structure, they were able to introduce new tactics into the European cavalry tradition – making large-scale mounted raids, and putting cavalry into battle to fight dismounted as the Carthaginian heavier Spanish horse. The common cavalry tactics of the day held they were best suited for scouting, covering the army's flank, charging infantry formations, and to cause confusion during a retreat. The most notable change to these practices was the large-scale mounted raid.³⁹⁶ Additionally, the Confederates were better led by such legendary cavalry officers as: Wade Hampton, the fearless South Carolina horseman; John Hunt Morgan; Joseph Wheeler, this author's great-great-great uncle; Fitz Lee, Robert E. Lee's nephew; Nathan Bedford Forrest, whose lightning raids on enemy camps made him one of the war's most feared commanders; and the flamboyant J.E.B. Stuart.³⁹⁷

Stuart and his regiment helped turn back the Union army at First Bull Run. During the Peninsular campaign, he led 1,200 men behind George McClellan's army to reconnoiter the Union flank. He provided Robert E. Lee with invaluable information regarding McClellan's troops by making a complete circuit of the Union forces over a 3-day period. Stuart captured 300 prisoners, arms, and additional valuable booty from Pope's headquarters' tent including books revealing Federal strength and details of Pope's position.³⁹⁸ The information he obtained helped Lee win the Battle of Gaines Mill,

³⁹⁵ S. Carter III, The Last Cavaliers: Confederate and Union Cavalry in the Civil War (New York, 1979), page 6.

³⁹⁶ R.N. Current, The Confederacy, pages 86-90.

³⁹⁷ B. Catton, The Civil War, pages 149-150.

³⁹⁸ B. Davis, Gray Fox, page 119.

changing the role of the cavalry in the American war and establishing Confederate pre-eminence. After Gettysburg the Federal cavalry began to operate as the Confederates had from the beginning, just as Scipio later duplicates Hannibal's success using his horsemen to take out the Carthaginian wings and as a final stroke to engage the rear of the infantry.³⁹⁹ On June 9, 1863, by the narrowest of margins Gen. J.E.B. Stuart defeated the Union cavalry led by General Alfred Pleasonton in the largest cavalry engagement in American history – the Battle of Brandy Station, Virginia.⁴⁰⁰ For the first time in the war the Union riders demonstrated themselves equals to the Southerners. Though Pleasonton retreated from the field it proved a moral victory for the North. Imbued with a sense of confidence they became a formidable force for the remaining years of the war.⁴⁰¹

Both Polybius and Livy agree Hannibal started out with a very large army: 90,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry,⁴⁰² and 37 elephants,⁴⁰³ comprised of men from Carthage, Numidia, Spain, and the Balearic Islands.⁴⁰⁴ Although the Confederacy encompassed a tremendous area, the population density was sparse with only 9 million people. Of these 9 million Southerners, only the 5.5 million whites could supply men for a total of approximately 1,140,000 men of combat age. Statistics are not readily available regarding the size of the Confederate army because many records were destroyed in the final days

³⁹⁹ A. Lloyd, Destroy Carthage, page 140.

⁴⁰⁰ R.N. Current, The Confederacy, page 71.

⁴⁰¹ B. Davis, Gray Fox, pages 211-213.

⁴⁰² Polybius, The Histories, 3.35; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 366-367 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.22.

⁴⁰³ Polybius, The Histories, 2.42.

⁴⁰⁴ T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, page 38.

of the war; however, generally accepted estimates range from 850,000 – 1,000,000 men.⁴⁰⁵

We might consider at this point the disposition of the troops prior to Hannibal's departure for Italy. Even as the plans for his campaign progressed, he left 11,850 Libyan infantry and 450 horse as the Carthaginian standing army left in Spain, while he took 20,000 African infantry with him on his march to Italy.⁴⁰⁶ Apparently as described by Polybius:

“He dismissed at the same time an equal number of troops to their homes, with the view of leaving them well disposed to himself and encouraging the hope of a safe return in the rest of the Spaniards, not only those who were serving with him, but those who remained at home, so that if he ever had to call on them for reinforcements, they might all readily respond. With the rest of his force, thus lightened of its impedimenta and consisting now of fifty thousand foot and about nine thousand horse, he advanced through the Pyrenees towards the crossing of the Rhône, having now an army not so strong in number as serviceable and highly trained owing to the unbroken series of wars in Spain.”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 8.

⁴⁰⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.35; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 366-367 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.22. Whether the Libyans were technically mercenaries or subject conscript troops has been debated.

⁴⁰⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.35.6-7.

“εις δε την οικειαν απελυσε τους ισους τοις προειρημενοις, βουλψομενος αυτους τε τουτους ευνους απολιπειν, τοις τε λοιποις υποδεικνυων ελπιδα της εις οικον επανοδου, και τοις μεθ' εαυτου μεν στρατευομενοις, ουχ ηττον δε και τοις εν οικω μενουσι των 'Ιβηρων, ινα προθυμως εξορμωσι παντες, αν ποτε τις επικουριας χρεια γενηται παρ' αυτων. την δε λοιπην στρατιαν αναλαβων ευζωνον, πεζους μεν πεντακισμυριους, ιππεις δε προς εννακισχιλιους ηγε δια των

Because the security of the region was of great importance to Hannibal's overall strategy, it is not surprising that he detached a sizeable force of infantry and cavalry under the command of Hanno. The detachment could maintain a watch over the pro-Roman Greek colony of Emporium on the coast further guarding the sea passage across the Straits of Gibraltar.⁴⁰⁸ Although Livy asserts this reduction in Carthaginian strength had already been compounded by 3,000 desertions from among the less reliable Spanish levies, it is more probable that Hannibal dismissed the additional 7,000 Spanish troops whose reliability he questions rather than see the morale among his other troops affected by their desertions.

Livy provides a probable account of the "dismissal" reported by Polybius. He maintains that as Hannibal's army crossed the Pyrenees:

"...and more definite rumours had spread amongst the barbarians that the war was to be with Rome, three thousand of the Carpetanian foot turned back. It was understood that they were influenced not so much by the war as by the long march and the impossibility of crossing the Alps. To recall them or to detain them forcibly would have been hazardous, for it might have roused resentment in the savage bosoms of the others. And so Hannibal sent back to their homes above seven thousand more, whom he had perceived to be chafing at the service, pretending that he had also dismissed the Carpetani."⁴⁰⁹

Πυρηναιῶν λεγομένων ὁρῶν ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ Ῥοδανοῦ καλούμενου ποταμοῦ διαβασιν, ἔχων οὐχ οὕτως πολλὴν δύναμιν ὡς χρησιμὴν καὶ γεγυμνασμένην διαφέροντως ἐκ τῆς συνεχείας τῶν κατὰ Ἰβηρικὰν ἀγῶνων." & F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, pages 366-367.

⁴⁰⁸ Sir G. de Beer, *Hannibal's March* (London, 1967), pages 26-27.

⁴⁰⁹ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.23.4-6. "...rumorque per barbaros manavit certior de bello Romano, tris milia inde Carpetanorum peditum iter averterunt. Constabat non tam bello motos quam longinquitate viae insuperabilique Alpium transitu. Hannibal, quia revocare aut vi retinere eos anceps erat, ne ceterorum etiam

Nevertheless, Livy's version of this mass desertion, followed by an additional "dismissal" of desertion risks, is definitely credible since it was a last-chance barrier for would-be deserters; beyond the Pyrenees, a deserter had a fast-dwindling chance of ever making his way home. It would be the least of surprises, then, if the impulse to desert reached something of a peak as the army reached the Pyrenees. Hannibal could improve morale both in the army and among the Carthaginian subjects in Spain by allowing these men to turn back. Having crossed a psychological barrier as well as the physical barrier of the Pyrenees, the men who remained would be all the more committed to going on.

But regardless of the actual account of the desertions and/or dismissals by the time he left Emporium in late August he had lost no fewer than 20,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry since leaving Carthago Nova. Viewed in this context, Polybius' mysterious discrepancy of 20,000 infantry becomes understandable. The army that entered Gaul may indeed have been much smaller than the one that left Carthago Nova, but surely the army entering Gaul was a much better one. The initial leg of the march through Spain had served the purpose of basic training. The unfit and disaffected had been weeded out; those who remained had marched, camped, and welded into a cohesive force. Ahead of them lay the wealth of Italy and the plunder of Rome.

As the army moved deliberately against a number of pro-Roman tribes they were involved in heavy fighting between the Ebro and the Pyrenees. Historians suggest Polybius exaggerated Hannibal's troop strength at this point because he claims another 12,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry are lost. Although a few Celtic tribes contested his march, there is no suggestion by the ancient sources that Hannibal suffered great losses during this process. Other potential sources of information such as archeological

feroces animi inritarentur, supra septem milia hominum domos remisit, quos et ipsos gravari militia senserat. Carpetanos quoque ab se dimissos simulans."

evidence supports the theory that these troops were actually detached by Hannibal to establish and maintain garrisons to protect his lines back to Spain. Carthaginian control of the region was necessary in order to secure the lines of communication from Italy back to Spain. With his army now at its peak of efficiency and numbering 50,000 infantry and 9,000 horse, as well as 37 elephants,⁴¹⁰ Hannibal crossed the Pyrenees and headed for the Rhône.⁴¹¹

The March from the Rhône to the Po Valley⁴¹²

By the end of September Hannibal reached the Rhône at a point four days' march from the sea, about 50 miles from the mouth of the river.⁴¹³ It is clear from what information remains that their arrival was facilitated by the agreement with the Celtic tribes of the region allowing the Carthaginians safe passage. In all probability these tribes were on the one hand eager to have the army move on as quickly as possible while on the other happy to reap the profits from the sale of supplies.⁴¹⁴ Apparently even

⁴¹⁰ For more on why Hannibal believed elephants could cross the Alps, see H.H. Scullard, The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World (London, 1974), pages 154-159.

⁴¹¹ T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, page 39.

⁴¹² For a concise narrative of the March, see H.H. Scullard, A History of the Roman World 753 to 146 B.C., 4th Edition (London, 1980), pages 203-207. See also Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 120-182; J. Briscoe, "The Second Punic War", The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VIII Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C., 2nd Edition, page 47; B. Caven, The Punic Wars, pages 98-106; A.J. Church, Carthage, or the Empire of Africa (London, 1888), pages 185-194; L. Cottrell, Hannibal, pages 31-84; T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 163-237; T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, pages 38-45; A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, pages 158-166; S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 57-80; J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 34-48 & J. Peddie, Hannibal's War (Stroud, 1997), pages 9-32.

⁴¹³ T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, page 39.

⁴¹⁴ T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, page 39.

though Hannibal's prior diplomatic measures had not fully won over all the Gallic tribes along the line of march, his army met no serious difficulty with them up to this point. But for whatever reason, the tribe occupying the territory on the opposite side of the river proved hostile. Whether it was influence from Rome's ally, Massilia or just an unfriendly adversary, Hannibal now faced the difficulty of a river crossing in the face of hostile resistance.⁴¹⁵

Rather than meet the enemy head on Hannibal dispatched a detachment under the leadership of Hanno, son of Bomilcar, the *suffete* who staunchly supported Hannibal against Rome's demands for his surrender during the Saguntine crisis, with orders to cross the river approximately 25 miles upstream, then to attack the enemy from behind. Using this time Hannibal completed preparations for crossing the Rhône. The following day as Hanno set fire to the Volcae's camp, Hannibal attacked the confused and disordered Gauls who broke and fled. Here the ancient historians provide evidence of Hannibal's tactical astuteness as the Volcae are driven off and he successfully moves his army across the Rhône, all without serious loss or delay.⁴¹⁶

During the opening stages of the war with Carthage, the Roman Senate formulated a strategy based on the assumption that the war would be fought with Hannibal on the defensive in Spain. The Senate ordered Consul Publius Cornelius Scipio to Spain with a force of 25,000 to stop any Carthaginian advance. The second consul, Tiberius Sempronius Longus, they dispatched to Sicily with orders to establish a base for the

⁴¹⁵ Although Polybius does not name these Gauls, Livy identifies them as the Volcae. Polybius, The Histories, 3.42-43; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 377-379 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.26, 29.

⁴¹⁶ T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, page 37.

invasion of Africa.⁴¹⁷ Unanticipated events in Northern Italy changed these plans and caused the Romans to divert their attention from Hannibal. Roman expansion into Cisalpine Gaul after their victory at Telamon in 225 B.C. and the establishment of two new Roman colonies at Cremona and Placentia provoked two Celtic tribes, the Boii and Insubres. We might consider at this point whether or not Hannibal arranged for the Celts to revolt at this time; the outcome of the events was decidedly to his advantage. Even if this is not the case when his agents arrived in the territory of the Boii and Insubres in early 218, they were unquestionably given a sympathetic hearing. As the Celts attacked the 6,000 Roman colonists, the Romans abandoned Placentia and Cremona and retreated to Mutina, followed by the vengeful Celts. When Manlius, the Roman commander of the region of the Po Valley, brought up his legion to relieve the town he was ambushed, causing the survivors to withdraw into the settlement of Tannetum to await relief. In the absence of any reserve units, the Romans had no choice but to draw upon those conscripted by Scipio for service in Spain, which caused an advantageous delay for Hannibal in Scipio's departure.⁴¹⁸

By the time the Roman army under Scipio's command finally moved westward to Spain by sea "...coming to anchor off the first mouth of the Rhône, known as the Massaliotic mouth...",⁴¹⁹ Hannibal sent out a cavalry force of 500 Numidians to find out the size, position, and intentions of the Roman army. Shortly after he landed, Scipio also

⁴¹⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.40 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 374-377.

⁴¹⁸ J. Prevas, Hannibal Crosses the Alps, page 89.

⁴¹⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.41.5 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 377.

sent out a force of 300 horsemen to scout around the area of Massilia.⁴²⁰ The subsequent skirmish between these mounted forces represents the first armed clash between the principals in the 2nd Roman War.⁴²¹ The Romans drove back the Numidian cavalry with a loss of more than half their number. At the same time the survivors arrived in great disorder, a delegation led by King Magalus from the Boii (the Celtic tribe fighting to Romans in the Po Valley) arrived in Hannibal's camp to inform Hannibal of the war their tribe had begun with Rome. Having just crossed the Alps, Magalus reinforced Hannibal's decision to avoid a battle with Scipio and to proceed directly toward his main objective – Italy. With the Boii as guides the Carthaginians were safe to assume they would find a direct route through country well stocked with supplies. Hannibal broke camp at once. Three days later Scipio arrived to find Hannibal and his entire army had gone.⁴²²

Here we see Livy's depiction of Hannibal's assurances to his troops prior to breaking camp, from which he quotes:

“They might fancy them higher than the ranges of the Pyrenees; but surely no lands touched the skies or were impassable to man. The Alps were indeed inhabited, were tilled, produced and supported living beings; their defiles were practicable for armies. Those very ambassadors whom they beheld [from the Cisalpine Gauls] had not crossed the Alps in the air on wings. Even the ancestors of these men had not been natives of Italy, but had lived there as foreign settlers,

⁴²⁰ J. Prevas, Hannibal Crosses the Alps, page 90.

⁴²¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.45.

“... και καθορμισθεις προς το πρωτον στομα του 'Ροδανου, το Μασσαλιωτικον προσαγορευομενον,...” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 379-380.

⁴²² T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, page 41 and J. Prevas, Hannibal Crosses the Alps, page 97.

and had often crossed these very Alps in great companies, with their children and their wives, in the manner of emigrants.”⁴²³

He might put it this way, the Alps “indeed were inhabited,” however this provided no unalloyed benefit to Hannibal’s army. Here we see what sort of situation Hannibal had faced up to this point. So far he had avoided serious difficulty with the Gauls, partly through prior diplomacy and partly through bluster effectively backed by his large army. Even the Volcae had given him little difficulty in crossing the Rhône, and he managed to dodge Publius Scipio’s army. But now in the Alpine passage, the army had to contend with the rigors of crossing the mountain passes in autumn as well as resistance by the local Gauls, the Allobroges.⁴²⁴

Here we see the appearance of Scipio at Massilia forced Hannibal to abandon his original plans to follow a direct and easy route through the Alps. Instead through necessity he moved his army further north along the Rhône River and followed a more difficult route.⁴²⁵ Thus Hannibal contemplated a plan not to engage the Roman army even though he heavily outnumbered it. Why did he leave the way open for Rome to carry on a counter-invasion of Spain by not engaging Scipio in battle? If he clashed with Scipio’s army now he would have been distracted from his strategic objective. Even if he had won a decisive victory, the losses to his army in addition to a delay were more than he

⁴²³ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.30.7-8.

⁴²⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.50-53 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 388-390.

⁴²⁵ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.31. “Fingerent altiores Pyrenaei iugis: nullas profecto terras caelum contingere nec inexsuperabiles humano generi esse. Alpes quidem habitari coli gignere atque alere animantes; pervias fauces esse exercitibus. Eos ipsos quos cernant legatos non pinnis sublime elatos Alpes transgressos. Ne maiores quidem eorum indigenas sed advenas Italiae cultores has ipsas Alpes ingentibus saepe agminibus cum liberis ac coniugibus migrantium modo tuto transmisisse.”

could afford. Hannibal must have surmised Scipio now knew the invasion of Italy to be his objective; he had to cross the Alps quickly before the Romans had time to assemble their forces and prepare for the invasion or the weather made the route impassable.⁴²⁶

After marching for four days along the Rhône, Hannibal reached a piece of land called the “Island”⁴²⁷ inhabited by a large tribe on the verge of internecine warfare. Based on evidence by Polybius, Hannibal sided with the elder brother, Brancus. This was perhaps partly because in return for helping Brancus drive his younger brother and his supporters from the area, Brancus showed his gratitude by giving Hannibal new weapons to replace those damaged or lost in the recent fighting, warm clothes and boots suitable for the mountains, plus guides and a cavalry escort as far as the foothills of the Alps.⁴²⁸ For ten days Hannibal marched up the Isere River covering nearly 100 miles where his escorts departed. From the point where the escorts turned back almost to the summit, the Allobroges harried Hannibal’s column as the army began to advance into the more difficult country. The Allobroges began to shadow the column from the heights above the riverbed,⁴²⁹ attacking the marching column from above inflicting heavy casualties on both men and animals as they fell to their deaths.⁴³⁰

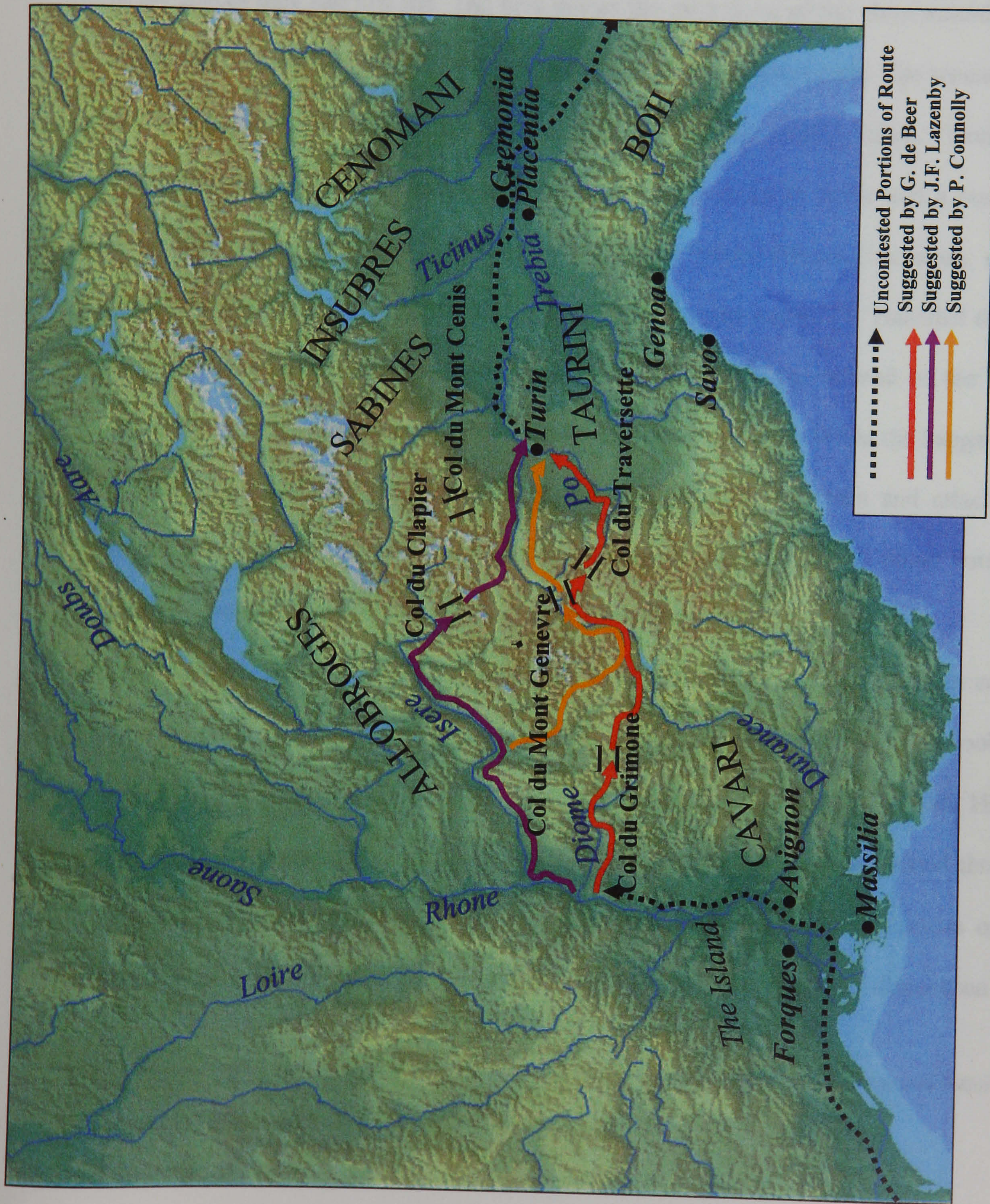
⁴²⁶ J. Prevas, Hannibal Crosses the Alps, pages 99-103.

⁴²⁷ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.31.4. “Insulam”; also Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 131-140.

⁴²⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 3.49; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 382-388 & J. Prevas, Hannibal Crosses the Alps, page 105.

⁴²⁹ J. Prevas, Hannibal Crosses the Alps, pages 101 & 110 and T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, page 42.

⁴³⁰ The rivers offer the only passable way for an army to make its way through the Alps because they afford reasonably level footing, ample supplies of water, and eventually lead to passes over the high peaks.



Possible Routes for Hannibal's Army over the Alps

The Celtic scouts reported they suspected the tribesmen only shadowed the column during the day and returned to their villages at night.⁴³¹ When the tribesman left their positions and withdrew to the nearby villages for the night, Hannibal placed a force in the spaces they had just left. The next day as the main force of the army wound its way along in a slow moving line the Allobroges attacked the baggage train. The wounded and terrified animals and the troops fell over the edge to the depths below. “During this interval a good many of the horses which had broken away in terror and a number of those sumpter-animals which had thrown off their packs returned strangely enough, having followed the track of the march, and came into the camp.”⁴³² Hannibal did what he could to stop the disaster by attacking from above, but the turmoil of the fighting caused even more confusion until the Allobroges broke and fled. While the baggage train and cavalry made their way on to safer ground, he rallied the men and attacked the neighbouring village the tribesmen had been using as a base. Here he found horses and enough corn and cattle to feed his army for two to three days.

After repeated attacks the tribesmen agreed to a truce, only to use it as cover to ambush the army as they passed in particularly difficult terrain. The next battle took place near Modane. The inhabitants of the area sent hostages with offers to provide Hannibal with guides; however, they suddenly attacked in full force as the army passed through a gorge. Once again Hannibal’s expert tactical skills emerge as Polybius points out that only his prudent suspicion of the peace-offer and equally far-sighted disposition of his

⁴³¹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.32. According to Livy the scouts spoke the same language and listened in on some of the conversations to gain valuable information.

⁴³² Polybius, The Histories, 3.53.10.

“ἐν ᾧ καιρῷ συνεβη πολλοὺς μὲν ἵππους τῶν ἀπεπτοημένων, πολλὰ δ’ ὑποζυγία τῶν ἀπερριφθῶν
τὰ φορτία παραδοξῶς ἀναδραμεῖν τοῖς στιβοῖς ἐπομένα καὶ συναψαὶ πρὸς τὴν παρεμβολήν.”

troops saved his army from disaster.⁴³³ Not trusting their truce, Hannibal sent the more vulnerable part of his force, the cavalry and the baggage-train, on in front so the solid mass of his heavy infantry were placed between them and the expected direction of attack. From this point on Hannibal had little trouble with the Gauls other than sporadic attempts to pillage. They reached the head of the pass just nine days after they began the ascent.⁴³⁴ In any attempt to relate the march it is difficult to separate the events from the man.

Having survived the Allobroges, the army pressed on through the higher passes – the exact route remains a matter of dispute with both ancient and modern historians – and since it requires very specific familiarity with the geography to even attempt to resolve, this study will not address the question. It is sufficient for me to express that Polybius’ description of the conditions faced seems nearly as severe as those of the earlier writers against whom he had leveled his strictures: “...for the summits of the Alps and the parts near the top of the passes are all quite treeless and bare owing to the snow lying there continuously both winter and summer, but the slopes half-way up on both sides are grassy and wooded and on the whole inhabitable.”⁴³⁵

⁴³³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.53 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 390.

⁴³⁴ T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, page 43.

⁴³⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.55.9.

“τῶν γὰρ Ἀλπεῶν τὰ μὲν ἀκρὰ καὶ τὰ πρὸς τὰς ὑπερβολὰς ἀνηκόντα τελεῶς ἀδενδρὰ καὶ ψιλὰ παντ’ ἐστὶ διὰ τὸ συνεχῶς ἐπιμένειν τὴν χιόνα καὶ θεροῦς καὶ χειμῶνος, τὰ δ’ ὑπο μέσῃν τὴν παρῳρείαν ἐξ ἀμφοῖν τοῖν μεροῖν ὕλοφ’ οὐ καὶ δένδροφ’ οὐ καὶ τὸ ὅλον οἰκησιμ’ ἐστίν.”

Conditions were not made easier by the season. Polybius reports that the crossing was made “...close on the [dawn] setting of the Pleiades...”⁴³⁶ the earliest of which would be the end of October, and more probably early in November.⁴³⁷ Livy disagrees and a modern note to his text identifies the date as about the 20th of October.⁴³⁸ Even if Livy is correct, Hannibal cut his timing very fine; had he delayed to give Scipio battle, he surely would have found conditions in the Alps even harsher than they were, perhaps to the point of rendering them impassable.

Polybius writes that the most difficult portion of the entire march came as they descended from the final high-level crossing:

“The descending path was very narrow and steep, and as both men and beasts could not tell on what they were treading owing to the snow, all that stepped wide of the path or stumbled were dashed down the precipice. This trial, however, they put up with, being by this time familiar with such sufferings, but they at length reached a place where it was impossible for either the elephants or the pack-animals to pass owing to the extreme narrowness of the path, a previous landslip having carried away about one and a half stades of the face of the mountain and a further landslip having recently occurred, and here the soldiers once more became disheartened and discouraged.”⁴³⁹

⁴³⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.54.1.

“της δε χιονος ηδη περι τους ακρους αθροιζομενης δια το συναπτειν την της Πλειαδος δυσιν...”

& F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 390.

⁴³⁷ D. Proctor, Hannibal March in History (Oxford, 1971), pages 40-5.

⁴³⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.35 and note 1 on page 102.

⁴³⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.54.5-7.

“ουσης γαρ στενης και κατωφερους της καταβασεως, της δε χιονος αδηλον ποιουσης εκαστοις την επιβασιν, παν το παραπεσον της οδου και σφαλεν εφερετο κατα των κρημων. ου μην αλλα

In one complicated instance we see what sort of situation tested Hannibal's reasoning skills and can assess the unconventional methods he used to solve the problem. At first he tried to detour around the landslide, but the soft newly fallen snow gave way easily and underneath stretched a hard layer of ice. The soldiers' feet slipped uncontrollably and once they lost their balance the steepness of the slope sent them plummeting headlong with no chance to save themselves. The mules and horses struggled as they fell, cutting through this lower level with their hoofs they became trapped in the ice. Realizing a detour impossible, Hannibal pitched camp on the mountainside and prepared to rebuild the road. He made the huge boulders easier to move by lighting fires closely around them and pouring sour wine over the hot rocks to split and crumble them. At the end of the day's work a road had been made wide enough to pass the horses and pack animals down to a camp below the snowline; however, it took three days of unrelenting toil before the road was wide enough to take the half-starved elephants. After another three days he reached the plains.⁴⁴⁰

Polybius estimates, "The whole march from Carthago Nova had taken him five months, and he had spent fifteen days in crossing the Alps, and now, when he thus boldly

ταυτην μεν υπεφερον την ταλαιπωριαν, ατε συνηθεις οντες ηδη τοις τοιουτοις κακοις· αμα δε τω παραγενεσθαι προς τοιουτον τοπον, ον ουτε τοις θηριοις ουτε τοις υποζυγιοις δυνατον ην παρελθειν δια την στενοτητα, σχεδον επι τρι' ημισταδια της απορρωγος και προ του μεν ουσης, τοτε δε και μαλλον ετι προσφατως απερρωγυιας, ενταυθα παλιν αθυμησαι και διατραπηναι συνεβη το πληθος." & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 391.

⁴⁴⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 3.54.

"τελος δε την μεν πασαν πορειαν εκ Καινης πολεως εν πεντε μηνσι ποιησαμενος, την δε των 'Αλπεων υπερβολην ημεραις δεκαπεντε, κατηρε πολμηρως εις τα περι τον Παδον πεδια και το των 'Ινσομβρων εθνος..." & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 390-391.

descended into the plain of the Po and the territory of the Insubres...”⁴⁴¹ He concludes the total length of the march to be 9,000 stades, or about 1,100 miles;⁴⁴² therefore, the average progress was seven to eight miles per day. Using these calculations on average Hannibal’s army made a full day’s march every other day, not accounting for river crossings, skirmishes, or crossing the Alps.⁴⁴³ It is fair to say that over a five-month period, Hannibal’s army set a demanding pace. The unfit would have literally fallen to the wayside.

In citing the Lacinium inscription Polybius paints a grim account of the numbers surviving the march, “...his surviving forces numbered twelve thousand African and eight thousand Iberian foot, and not more than six thousand horse in all, as he himself states in the inscription on the column at Lacinium relating to the number of his forces.”⁴⁴⁴ But as far as Hannibal had these numbers inscribed on a bronze tablet and placed on a promontory at Capo Calonne, they are probably the most accurate figures we have. If accurate, he had as noted above lost nearly half the army in the fifteen days it took to

⁴⁴¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.56.3 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 391-392.

⁴⁴² Polybius, The Histories, 3.39 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 371-374.

⁴⁴³ A typical day’s march for an army on foot is perhaps fifteen miles; rather less for Roman armies with their elaborate daily encampments.

⁴⁴⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.56.4.

“... εξων το διασωζομενον μερος της μεν των Λιβυων δυναμεως πεζους μυριους και δισχιλιους, της δε των Ιβηρων εις οκτακισχιλιους, ιππεις δε τους παντας ου πλειους εξακισχιλιων, ως αυτος εν τη στηλη τη περι του πληθους εχουση την επιγραφην επι Λακινιω διασαφει.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 391-392.

cross the Alps.⁴⁴⁵ The only other figures of similar reliability is Cincius Alimentus' alleged statement that Hannibal told him he lost 36,000 men crossing the Alps.⁴⁴⁶ Livy may have misunderstood or misreported this if the figure he gave was for the losses between the Pyrenees and Italy, it is not much different from those Polybius cites as 59,000 at the Pyrenees, 26,000 in Italy. Of Polybius' implied losses of 34,000 between the Apennines and Italy, most must have been suffered in the Alps.

Hannibal exacted an enormous human toll for his decision to march by an inland route; he subjected his army to a level of attrition that might be expected to totally destroy morale. The idea that infantry, at least, would have been reduced from as much as 70,000 after initial detachments and desertions or dismissals to as little as 20,000 after crossing the Alps, is an attrition rate of about seventy percent. The earlier attrition of the army as it left Spain had not been a morale factor. No one misses deserters, but the loss of sixty percent of infantry strength and forty percent of cavalry strength – mostly in the two-week passage of the Alps – would prove far graver. These were men who had become the survivors' comrades in arms. Not the least of Hannibal's qualities as a general is his ability to maintain, or quickly restore, the morale of his army after this harrowing experience. What Hannibal lacked in numbers he managed to retain in quality. He possessed in his Africans and Spanish infantry and markedly superior Numidian cavalry the core of a highly effective army. The next section of this chapter investigates the nature of the conflicts once Hannibal and his army arrive in Italy.

⁴⁴⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.55 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.38.

⁴⁴⁶ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.38

Descent from the Alps⁴⁴⁷

Luckily, we shall see just a Hannibal's army descended from the Alps into the North Italian plain, war broke out between two tribes of Cisalpine Gauls – the Taurini and the Insubres – which provided Hannibal with an excellent opportunity to forcibly engage the attentions of the Gauls.

“...when the Taurini who live at the foot of the mountains quarreled with the Insubres and showed no confidence in the Carthaginians, [Hannibal] at first made overtures for their friendship and alliance, but on their rejecting these he encamped round their chief city and reduced it in three days. By massacring those who had been opposed to him he struck such terror into the neighbouring tribes that they all came in at once and submitted to him.”⁴⁴⁸

The diplomatic manoeuvrings that underlay this affair are obscure. But for the most part it seems as though Hannibal originally made overtures to the Taurini, and only

⁴⁴⁷ For a brief narrative of the events from Hannibal's arrival in Italy to the conclusion of the Battle of Cannae, see H.H. Scullard, A History of the Roman World 753 to 146 B.C., pages 207-211. For more on Hannibal in Italy before the Battle of Ticinus, see J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 49-52; before the Battle of the Trebia, see A.J. Church, Carthage, pages 195-198.

⁴⁴⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 3.60.8-10.

“μετα δε ταυτα, προσανειληφειας ηδη της δυναμεως, των Ταυρινων, οι τυγχανουσι προς τη παρωρεια κατοικουντες, στασιαζοντων μεν προς τους Ίνσομβρας, απιστουντων δε τοις Καρχηδονιοις, το μεν πρωτον αυτους εις φιλιαν προυκαλειτο και συμμαχιαν· ουχ υπακουοντων δε, περιστρατοπεδευσας την βαρυτατην πολιν εν τρισιν ημεραις εξεπολιορκησε. κατασφαξας δε τους εναντιωθεντας αυτω τοιουτον ενειργασατο φοβον τοις συνεγγυς κατοικουσι των βαρβαρων ωστε παντας εκ χειρος παραγινεδθαι, διδοντας αυτους εις την πιστιν.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 395.

after these were rejected did he attack and storm their chief town.⁴⁴⁹ For argument sake it may be the Taurini were the stronger of the two tribes, and Hannibal initially preferred an alliance with them, and attacked them only after their equivocal response to his overtures. Alternatively, he may have called on both combatant tribes to set aside their local dispute and join forces with him against Rome. Yet another possibility is Hannibal simply looked for any opportunity to make an object demonstration of his army's strength to dispel any impression the Gauls may have formed of its haggard condition so soon after crossing the Alps. It perhaps may simply have been the bad luck of the Taurini that they were slow to respond favourably to his offers.

Regardless of the actual reason, the result is clear: the Cisalpine Gauls became aware that Hannibal had a formidable army, and some – presumably the Insubres, whom he had aided, but probably others as well – came over to his side. There was, however, no general uprising of the Gauls. Polybius hints that more would have come over to Hannibal had they not already been constrained by the presence of a Roman army: “The remaining Celtic inhabitants of the plain were impatient to join the Carthaginians, as had been their original design, but as the Roman legions had advanced beyond most of them and cut them off, they kept quiet, some even being compelled to serve with the Romans.”⁴⁵⁰ Livy agrees with Polybius' assessment and makes the same point; the Romans “... had not the consul taken them by surprise, appearing unexpectedly whilst

⁴⁴⁹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.39.

⁴⁵⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 3.60.11-12.

“το δε λοιπον πληθος των τα πεδια κατοικουντων Κελτων εσπουδαζε μεν κοινωνειν τοις Καρχηδονιοις των πραγματος κατα την εξ αρχης επιβολην· παρηλλαχотων δε των 'Ρωμαικων στρατοπεδων ηδη τους πλειστους αυτων και διακεκλεικοτων, ησυχιαν ηγον· τινες δε και συστρατευειν ηναγκαζοντο τοις 'Ρωμαιοις.”



Hannibal's Progress Through Italy

they were looking about them for a pretext to revolt.”⁴⁵¹ He goes on to suggest the attitude of the Gauls was equivocal and opportunistic, ready to throw with the side that seemed more likely to win, or at least with the army that was most immediately at hand and so in a position to overawe them. “Hannibal, too, moved forward from the Taurini, being persuaded that the Gauls, uncertain which side they had best adhere to, would attach themselves to those who were on the spot.”⁴⁵² Later, Hannibal ravaged the territory of tribes allied to Rome as a goad to force the Roman army into an imprudent battle at Trebia.⁴⁵³ Obviously, the uncertain attitude of the Gauls pushed both Hannibal and the Romans into an early battle; each side could, by a quick victory, even if a non-decisive one, hope to solidify its own position in Cisalpine Gaul.

Ticinus⁴⁵⁴

Once Consul Publius Cornelius Scipio placed his army under his brother Gnaeus with instructions to continue on to Spain, he returned to Italy. Landing at Pisae, he

⁴⁵¹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.39.5. “... ni eos circumspectantes defectionis tempus subito adventu consul oppressisset.”

⁴⁵² Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.39.6. “Et Hannibal movit ex Taurinis, incertos quae pars sequenda esset Gallos praesentem secuturos esse ratus.”

⁴⁵³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.69 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 403.

⁴⁵⁴ See Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 184-186; J. Briscoe, “The Second Punic War”, The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VIII Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C., 2nd Edition, page 49; B. Caven, The Punic Wars, pages 106-108; L. Cottrell, Hannibal, pages 85-91; A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, pages 169-173; S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 82-85 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal’s War, pages 52-53. For a discussion of the tactics used by both sides during the 2nd Roman War, see D. Head, Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars 359 B.C. to 146 B.C., pages 54-61. For the types of troops used by both sides, particularly the archaeological evidence, see T. Wise, Armies of the Carthaginian Wars 265-146 B.C., Men-At-Arms Series No. 121 (London, 1982).

crossed the Apennines to take command of the northern Roman army already in place.⁴⁵⁵ Although each general was surprised at the swift and sudden appearance of the other,⁴⁵⁶ both were eager to test the enemy. As soon as Scipio received news of Hannibal's arrival in Cisalpine Gaul, he departed Placentia and, having bridged the Po, marched into the territory of the Insubres. Throwing a second bridge across the river Ticinus, Scipio and Hannibal met in combat. As the armies drew close, both sent forward their cavalry.

That the Roman cavalry must have been heavily outnumbered is all we know. We do know from the earlier discussion in this chapter that Hannibal had at least 6,000 cavalry who survived the march from Spain. It is unclear, for example, how many of the Gallic cavalry had joined the Carthaginians. Scipio may have had as few as 2,000 cavalry -- perhaps somewhat more, since Polybius refers to Gallic cavalry in his force as well, suggesting he had more than Sempronius brought from the south.⁴⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the persistent image presented is that Scipio's cavalry was badly outnumbered, which may explain why he included light infantry in his force. Though faster-moving than legionaries, they could scarcely keep up with a cavalry move and were more vulnerable to a cavalry attack than a well-formed heavy infantry. Scipio may have reasoned that even light infantry, if well disciplined, could stand against the sort of cavalry he was accustomed to, armed at most with a light spear. What followed proved him wrong.

The Romans advanced slowly, probably limited by the marching speed of the infantry. The *leves* along with the Gaulish cavalry made up Scipio's front line, with his

⁴⁵⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.49 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 382-388.

⁴⁵⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.61 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 395-397.

⁴⁵⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.65 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 399.

other cavalry in the rear. Hannibal placed his heavier, bridle-using cavalry in the center, with the light Numidians on the wings. As the forces closed, the Roman *leves* dropped back and the two cavalry forces charged. “The cavalry met front to front and for some time maintained an evenly balanced contest, the engagement being both a cavalry and infantry one, owing to the number of men who dismounted during the progress.”⁴⁵⁸ The implication seems to be that the heavy cavalry on both sides used their horses largely for mobility, frequently dismounting to fight.

“When, however, the Numidians outflanked the Romans and took them in the rear, the javelineers on foot who had first escaped from the charge of the cavalry were now ridden down by the numbers and force of the Numidians, while the cavalry, who from the outset had been facing the Carthaginians, after suffering heavy loss and inflicting still greater on the enemy, being now attacked by the Numidians also in the rear, broke into flight, most of them scattering in every direction but a few gathering closely round the Consul.”⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 3.65.8-9.

“οι μεν ουν κατα προσωπον αλληλοις συμπεσοντες επι πολυν χρονον εποιουν ισορροπον τον κινδυνον· ομου γαρ ην ιππομαξια και πεζομαχια δια το πληθος των παρακαταβαινοντων ανδρων εν αυτη τη μαχη.”

⁴⁵⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.65.10-11.

“των δε Νομαδων κυκλωσαντων και κατοπιν επιπεσοντων, οι μεν πεζακοντισται το πρωτον διαφυγοντες την συμπτωσιν των ιππεων τοτε συνεπατηθησαν υπο του πληθους και της επιφορας των Νομαδων· οι δε κατα προσωπον εξ αρχης διαμαχομενοι προς τους Καρχηδονιους, πολλους μεν αυτων απολωλεκοτες, ετι δε πλειους των Καρχηδονιων διεφθαρμοτες, συνεπιθεμενων απ’ ουρας των Νομαδων, ετραπησαν, οι μεν πολλοι σποραδες, τινες δε περι τον ηγεμονα συστραφεντες.”

The skirmish at the Ticinus bears all the attributes of a classical Hannibalic battle in miniature. The Romans held their own center.⁴⁶⁰ The task of the center was only to hold the Romans long enough for the wings to swing around and take them in flank and rear. Once the flanking attack ensued, the Roman force disintegrated. Scipio himself was badly wounded in the action; Livy asserts only the quick thinking of his son, the seventeen year old Scipio “Africanus”, saved him.⁴⁶¹

Why did Scipio, a careful and capable general, engage in this high-risk operation? In his speech before the battle, as reported by both Polybius and Livy, he describes the weakness of Hannibal’s army, and calls attention to the ease with which the cavalry in his previous command, now under Gnaeus in Spain, had defeated Hannibal in the skirmishes near the Rhône.⁴⁶² While Scipio’s pre-battle speeches are a surprisingly boastful prediction of an easy victory, a general addressing his troops before a battle – especially a general having newly taken command of that army – is likely to give a pep talk, not a cool analysis of possible risks. Additionally, we are told on this same occasion Hannibal arranged a series of single combats between Gallic prisoners taken in the Alps; the intended lesson to his army being they must conquer or die.⁴⁶³ In Scipio the historians want the reader to imagine an encouraging upbeat leader while in Hannibal they present a callous brute.

⁴⁶⁰ Hannibal may have drawn that section of his battle line down to a prudent minimum, in order to put as much of his strength as possible into the wings.

⁴⁶¹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.46. Polybius recounts the same story much later in his work, though he makes no mention of it in his account of Ticinus, see Polybius, The Histories, 10.3 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II (Oxford, 1967), pages 198-199.

⁴⁶² Polybius, The Histories, 3.64 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 397-399.

⁴⁶³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.63 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 397.

In all probability Scipio genuinely underestimated the capabilities of Hannibal's army, particularly his cavalry. It indeed must have seemed to Scipio that Hannibal's cavalry had been thrown back with relative ease, while the entire Carthaginian army apparently retreated, refusing to engage a Roman army that before the passage of the Alps they had heavily outnumbered. Scipio could not have been privy at that time to Hannibal's actual strategy, which was specifically to avoid a battle in Gaul as a diversion from his objective of getting his army across the Alps to Italy. Perhaps the simplest explanation of Scipio's brash cavalry advance at Ticinus is, as Polybius suggests, that both he and Hannibal were carrying out a reconnaissance in force.⁴⁶⁴ The only way to determine the capabilities of Hannibal's army in combat was to test them directly. By making an advance with his cavalry and light troops, Scipio could do so without throwing his main battle force – his legionary and allied heavy infantry – into action against an enemy whose measure he had not yet taken. By personally commanding the reconnaissance action, he could gain this information firsthand, as well as show himself in action to his own troops who were not yet used to him. Given the results of the Ticinus action, it is clear that Scipio had underestimated the capability of Hannibal's army. Nevertheless, as a reconnaissance mission it achieved its objective – though at a considerable cost to Rome.

I have discussed the action at the Ticinus at length because it demonstrates so many of the crucial features of the battles that followed. For Scipio it must have been a rude awakening; for Hannibal it was a successful first test of his tactical methods against the Roman army. The victory, though limited in scale, also brought him reinforcements: the Cisalpine Gauls who previously had wavered now came over to Hannibal's side in

⁴⁶⁴ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.65 & F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, page 399.

much larger numbers, amounting to several thousand each of infantry and cavalry.⁴⁶⁵ Polybius reports one mass desertion of 2,000 infantry and 200 cavalry who went over to Hannibal in body.⁴⁶⁶ Because of this by the time Hannibal fought his first major engagement at the Trebia, his army strength had increased substantially.

Trebia⁴⁶⁷

Following his ill-fated reconnaissance action, Scipio fell back across the Po, and retreated along it to the river Trebia. There he camped and concentrated on recuperating himself and his forces until he was reinforced by his co-consul for the year, Tiberius Sempronius Longus. We must consider at this point faced with Hannibal's invasion, Sempronius had been recalled from Sicily and sent with his army to the northern theatre, at least doubling the strength on hand there.⁴⁶⁸ Owing to Scipio's weakness after being wounded – and perhaps to the army's lack of confidence in a general who had after all been defeated in his first action – Sempronius now became the dominant figure in shaping the Roman course of action. While Scipio "...considered that their legions would be all

⁴⁶⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.66 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 399-401.

⁴⁶⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.67 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 402.

⁴⁶⁷ See Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 186-189; J. Briscoe, "The Second Punic War", The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VIII Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C., 2nd Edition, page 49; B. Caven, The Punic Wars, pages 108-114; A.J. Church, Carthage, pages 198-205; L. Cottrell, Hannibal, pages 92-98; T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 266-277; A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, pages 173-181; D. Head, Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars 359 B.C. to 146 B.C., page 76; S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 85-88 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 55-59.

⁴⁶⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.59.1-9.

the better for a winter's drilling...,⁴⁶⁹ Sempronius was determined to seek early battle – perhaps to win the glory of a victory before his time in office as consul ran out.⁴⁷⁰ An apparently successful cavalry skirmish only increased Sempronius' eagerness for action. What he failed to realize was that Hannibal had called back his forces because as previously examined he wished to choose the time and circumstances of battle, not be drawn into one by the sheer force of events.⁴⁷¹

We also see that Hannibal had made an accurate judgment of Sempronius' attitudes and intentions. It is possible that he had direct intelligence brought by Gaulish deserters from the Roman camp, as implied by Livy.⁴⁷² The other possibility is he may have formed his opinions simply by observing the Romans' conduct. With the two forces encamped in close proximity, Hannibal, mindful of the fickle allegiance of his Celtic allies, chose now as the time to offer battle and set out quite deliberately to draw in the Romans. Knowing of their sensitivity to ambush amid woods, he enticed them to fight on ground where they would hardly suspect him to stage a trap. Having seen an area of flat terrain between the two encampments and the rivers Trebia and Luretta devoid of woods, ostensibly he would agree to accept battle in a place of Rome's choosing.

Once he had selected an equal force of 1,000 cavalry and infantry, Hannibal placed them under the command of his youngest brother, Mago, with strict instructions to hide and only emerge from cover to ambush the Romans at a crucial moment of the

⁴⁶⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.70.4.

“τα γὰρ στρατοπέδα χειμασκήσαντα βελτίω τα παρ' αὐτῶν υπελαμβάνε γενήσεσθαι,...” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 404.

⁴⁷⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 3.70 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 403-404.

⁴⁷¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.69 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 403.

⁴⁷² Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.53.

battle.⁴⁷³ Having set his ambush force in place, Hannibal ordered his Numidians to cross the Trebia and stage a dawn attack against the Roman camp with the specific intent of goading Sempronius into a hasty response.⁴⁷⁴ They accomplished exactly that. After first sending out a limited force to drive off the Numidians, and although this could have severe negative consequences to Rome, Sempronius proceeded to deploy his entire army, “...thinking that the mere sight of them would decide the issue, so much confidence did his superiority in numbers and the success of his cavalry on the previous day give him.”⁴⁷⁵

The role of human factors in ancient infantry warfare is shown with exceptional vividness in the battle of Trebia that followed. Both Polybius and Livy make specific contrast between the physical condition of Hannibal’s troops and their Roman opponents. The action of Hannibal’s direction further illustrates another strategic problem for the Roman army: his care for the men in his command as detailed in the following passage by Polybius:

“The time of year was about the winter solstice, and the day exceedingly cold and snowy, while the men and horses nearly all left the camp without having had their morning meal. At first their enthusiasm and eagerness sustained them, but when they had to cross the Trebia, swollen as it was owing to the rain that had fallen during the night higher up the valley than where the armies were, the

⁴⁷³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.71 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 404.

⁴⁷⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.71 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 404.

⁴⁷⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.72.2.

“... εκινει δε και την λοιπην δυναμιν εκ του χαρακος, ως εξ επιφανειας κριθησομενων των ολων, επαιρομενος τω τε πληθει των ανδρων και τω γεγονοτι τη προτεραια περι τους ιππεις εσημερηματι.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 404-406.

infantry had great difficulty in crossing, as the water was breast-high. The consequence was that the whole force suffered much from cold and also from hunger, as the day was now advancing. The Carthaginians, on the contrary, who had eaten and drunk in their tents and looked after their horses, were all anointing and arming themselves round their fires.”⁴⁷⁶

The Romans nevertheless advanced in good order; even after making their way through the river, they were still reported to advance “...on the enemy in imposing style marching in order at a slow step.”⁴⁷⁷ In the battle itself, in spite of all the physical and psychological difficulties they laboured under as compared to their enemies, the troops in the Roman front lines more than held their own:

“The heavy-armed troops on both sides, who occupied the advanced centre of the whole formation, maintained for long a hand-to-hand combat with no advantage on either side...[But after the flank and ambush attacks,] while the rear of the Roman centre was suffering heavy loss from the attack of the ambushade, those

⁴⁷⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.72.3-6.

“ουσης δε της ωρας περι χειμερινας τροπας και της ημερας νιφετωδους και ψυχρας διαφεροντως, των δ' ανδρων και των ιππων σχεδον ως ειπειν απαντων αναριστων εκπεπορευμενων, το μεν πρωτον ορμη και προθυμια το πληθος περιην· επιγενομενης δε της του Τρεβια ποταμου διαβασεως, και προσαναβεβηκοτος τω ρευματι δια τον εν τη νυκτι γενομενον εν τοις υπερ τα στρατοπεδα τοποις ομβρον, πολισ εως των μασθων οι πεζοι βαπτιζομενοι διεβαινον· εξ ων εκακοπαθει το στρατοπεδον υπο τε του ψυχους και της ενδειας, ως αν ηδη και της ημερας προβαινουσης. οι δε Καρχηδονιοι, κατα σκηνας βεβρωκοτες και πεπωκοτες, και τους ιππους ητοιμακοτες, ηλειφοντο και καθωπλιζοντο περι τα πυρα παντες.”; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 406 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.54-55.

⁴⁷⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.72.13.

“...επει τοις υπεναντιοις σοβαρως, εν ταξει και βαδην ποιουμενος την εφοδον.”

in the van, thus forced to advance, defeated the Celts and part of the Africans, and after killing many of them broke through the Carthaginian line.”⁴⁷⁸

So steady were the Roman troops in a straight frontal assault that it was the front lines, men who had been longest in action, who made up the largest proportion of Roman survivors. Cold, wet, and weary though they were, these men succeeded in breaking through Hannibal’s infantry front and fought their way free in a body, at least 10,000 getting safely to Placentia.⁴⁷⁹ The Roman heavy troops probably outnumbered their opponents along the main front of the battle, and perhaps, as Polybius suggests, received an impetus of desperation from the attacks on their flank and rear. It was still an impressive display of Roman steadiness and Hannibal took due note of their performance as is clear from subsequent battles.

For the Romans, defeat at Trebia spread from the edges inward. After throwing back the outnumbered and tired Roman cavalry, Polybius seems cynically to comment on this fact when he writes that:

“When the Roman cavalry fell back and left the flanks of the infantry exposed, the Carthaginian pike-men and the Numidians in a body, dashing past their own

⁴⁷⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 3.73.8-74.4.

“οι δ’ εν τοις βαρεσιν οπλοις, παρ’ αμφοιν τας πρωτας εχοντες και μεδας της ολης παρεμβολης ταξεις, επι πολυν χρονον εμαχοντο συσταδην, εφاميλλον ποιουμενοι τον κινδυνον... τουτου δε συμβαντος, οι κατα μεσον τον κινδυνον ταχθεντες των Ῥωμαίων, οι μεν κατομιν εφεστωτες υπο των εκ της ενεδρας προσπεσοντων απωλλυντο και κακως επασχον, οι δε περι τας πρωτας χωρας επαναγκασθεντες εκρατησαν των Κελτων και μερους τινος των Λιβυων, και πολλους αυτων αποκτειναντες διεκοψαν την των Καρχηδονιων ταξιν.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius. Vol. I, pages 406-407.

⁴⁷⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.73; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 407 & Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.54.

troops that were in front of them, fell on the Romans from both flanks, damaging them severely and preventing them from dealing with the enemy in their front... [Here follows the mention of indecisive heavy infantry action.] But now the Numidians issued from their ambushade and suddenly attacked the enemy's centre from the rear, upon which the whole Roman army was thrown into the utmost confusion and distress. At length both of Tiberius' wings, hard pressed in front by the elephants and all round their flanks by the light-armed troops, turned and were driven by their pursuers back on the river behind them.⁴⁸⁰

The reference to Hannibal's *λονχοφοροι* [pikemen] is confusing; here they are referred to as though they are light troops, operating in conjunction with the cavalry, though if the translation as "pike-men" is valid, it would imply that these were heavy-armed *phalangites*. This is especially interesting for it implies Hannibal used the same tactics as at Cannae, placing his best heavy troops on the inner flanks to box in the Roman centre. However, neither Polybius nor Livy specifies such a disposition. Rather than

⁴⁸⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 3.73.7-74.2.

“τοῖς δὲ Ῥωμαίοις τῶν ἰππεῶν υποχωρησάντων καὶ ψιλῶθεντων τῶν τῆς φαλαγγὸς κερατῶν, οἱ τε λογχοφοροὶ τῶν Καρχηδονίων καὶ τὸ τῶν Νομαδῶν πλῆθος, υπεραῖροντες τοὺς προτεταγμένους τῶν ἰδίων καὶ πρὸς τὰ κεράτα προσπιπτοντες τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις, πολλὰ καὶ κακὰ διεργάζοντο καὶ μαχεσθαι τοῖς κατὰ πρόσωπον οὐκ εἰδόν... ἐν ᾧ καιρῷ διαναστάντων τῶν ἐκ τῆς ἐνεδρᾶς Νομαδῶν, καὶ προσπεσοντῶν ἀφνω κατὰ νῶτον τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις περὶ τὰ μεσά, μεγάλην ταραχὴν καὶ δυσχρηστίαν συνεβaine γίνεσθαι περὶ τὰς τῶν Ῥωμαίων δυνάμεις. τέλος δ' ἀμφοτέρω τῶν κερατῶν περὶ τὸν Τεβερῖον πιεζόμενα κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν θηρίων, περιξ δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἐκ τῶν πλαγίων ἐπιφανείας ὑπὸ τῶν εὐζωνῶν, ἐτραπήσαν καὶ συνεώθουντο κατὰ τὸν διωγμὸν πρὸς τὸν ὑποκείμενον ποταμὸν.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 407. For more on Hannibal's use of elephants at the Battle of the Trebia, see H.H. Scullard, The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World, pages 159-161.

accept this view we see the ancient historians write of the flank attacks being characterized as carried out primarily by cavalry, supported by light infantry. If true, the Roman forces in the flank and rear were thrown into disorder, then slaughtered in droves. Mental acuity was surely a factor. Although these troops had been subjected to less sheer intensity of combat than those in the front lines of the heavy infantry action, they were exposed to greater confusion and uncertainty.

Had the Roman army fought in *phalanx* order, the catastrophic effects of attacks in flank and rear would require no further explanation; locked into place in their close order and encumbered by long spears, *phalangites* were nearly defenseless if put under sudden attack other than from the front. Potentially, the open *manipular* order should have increased the Roman army's ability to respond to attacks at flank or rear. Even if all formal order dissolved, the legionary with his short sword could fight more effectively in a general melee than a *phalangite* armed with a spear as primary weapon. Although the size of the forces, which attacked the Romans in flank and rear at Trebia were considerable, they were not so large as to gain overwhelming local superiority except on the extreme flanks. In particular, the ambush force under Mago was relatively modest – 1,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry. Could it have been a foregone conclusion to Hannibal that the Roman formations to these attacks would disintegrate as they did?

If we consider Hannibal's point of view, to avail themselves of their potential strengths, it was necessary for the Romans – from centurions to individual soldiers – to quickly respond to the sudden, alarming threat. Tired, hungry, and cold they could still prevail in a straight-ahead fight, even against troops in better physical and mental condition; but these same Romans would probably be unable to cope with the additional elements of confusion and surprise. The essence of Hannibal's tactics maximized those elements. The strength was disproportionately in cavalry, which was suited primarily to

flank and rear attack. Hannibal further relied on the Roman generals to prepare his work for him by thrusting their armies into a situation where the legionaries were caught off balance, their strengths at least partly negated, and their vulnerabilities maximized.

Seeing the Numidians' missile attack as a more unnerving threat to the encamped army than a direct infantry assault, Hannibal used them merely to draw the Romans out. Sempronius' mistake lay in deploying the troops at all in such an unfavourable situation. Secure in their camp from any serious threat, the Romans were free to prepare and deploy at their leisure. Or, as Scipio had advised, they could avoid a general engagement entirely until they could fight one in conditions more favourable. Why, then, did Sempronius fight when he could easily have avoided action? The explanations offered by Polybius and Livy center on his character, and on Hannibal's success at reading him. Sempronius, a bold, active commander,⁴⁸¹ had originally been assigned an important but secondary theatre in Sicily. He had a gift for fast movement, as well as the confidence of his men. Both can be seen when he ordered his troops at Lilybaeum to make their way individually to Ariminum, passing the length of Italy in just forty days.⁴⁸² He also had an appropriate concern for defending Roman allies when under attack by Hannibal – exactly what the Roman Senate had failed to do the year before when Hannibal attacked Saguntum, an error which if repeated would surely increase the danger of fracturing the Roman Alliance System. If cities were to accept subordination to Rome, and send their young men to fight in its armies, the least they could expect was their defense by those armies. To insist that Hannibal be confronted rather than allowed to continue his depredation was not without

⁴⁸¹ Which may be why the Roman Senate chose him initially for what was intended to be their primary offensive stroke of the war — the sea borne invasion of Africa.

⁴⁸² Polybius, The Histories, 3.61 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 395-397.

reason; on the other hand, these considerations do not justify the excessive risks Sempronius took at Trebia. The danger to Roman armies in fighting Hannibal was not the army they saw in front of them, but what might appear on their flank and rear. Earlier reference to society

Hannibal's timing and position were both flawless at Trebia. As with other great generals, from Alexander to Schwarzkopf, Hannibal's ability to make his plans work out as intended was extraordinary. Many officers can draw up battle plans based on envelopment – his crucial ingredient was the ability to transmit these plans to his subordinates in such clear and vivid terms that those subordinates could execute them with precision in the heat of battle.

When examining the ancient sources it appears the Roman commanders experienced an incompetence, which led them into traps that, however brilliantly executed, could have been avoided. Although Roman society was militaristic in nature, as we have discussed earlier, we must consider that at least in the first part of the war, consuls were elected only for one year and thereafter could not be re-elected again for 10 years in order to prevent any form of tyranny. As chief magistrates the consuls convened and presided over the Senate and assemblies, initiated and administered legislation, in addition they served as generals in military campaigns and represented Rome in foreign affairs. Consequently, due to the many civil duties of the office, military leadership was only a temporary part-term function in Rome, whereas Carthage had professional generals with long-term commands and no civil responsibilities.⁴⁸³ Later in this chapter I will discuss in depth how the change of the Union generals can be studied to appreciate how the yearly change of consuls led to an incoherent military plan and administration.

⁴⁸³ Though some Carthaginian generals needed to govern provinces, but this was rare outside the Barca family.

Perhaps the sophistication of the Roman army had the effect of tempting its generals to a lack of caution. The simple, inflexible classical *phalanx* discouraged both imagination and risk-taking; battles were fought in effect by mutual pre-arrangement, with as little as possible left to chance. A Roman *manipular* army could be trusted to deal with a certain amount of disorder on the battlefield. A small-scale flank or rear attack by a few cavalymen or light troops – and the Romans must have often encountered such in their frequent battles with irregular “barbarian” enemies – could be handled by centurions on the spot, turning their *maniples* as needed to meet the immediate threat. Roman generals perhaps felt little need to worry about tactical contingencies, and less anxiety than most of their contemporaries about pushing onto unfamiliar ground. They were particularly ill prepared to deal with Hannibal, who used flank and rear attacks on an unprecedented scale, and found the Romans only too willing to march all too confidently into unseen dangers

With the assistance of Gallic mercenaries Hannibal defeated the 40,000-strong Roman army, which lost three quarters of its men. In the first major engagement of the war, Polybius highlights Hannibal’s strength at about 20,000 infantry and more than 10,000 cavalry.⁴⁸⁴ Although Livy gives Hannibal 10,000 cavalry, among the infantry he lists only 8,000 Balearic slingers, deployed in front of the main heavy infantry line, the latter described only as “...the strength and flower of his army...”⁴⁸⁵ Though the ancient sources estimate the Roman losses at 15,000, they suggest Hannibal’s dead as slight, and mostly suffered by the Gauls. Though additional evidence suggests all but one of the

⁴⁸⁴ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.72 & F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, pages 404–407.

⁴⁸⁵ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 21.55.2. “...quod virium quod roboris erat;...”

elephants and many men and horses died from the cold soon after the battle.⁴⁸⁶ Of the Romans at least 10,000 escaped in mass to Placentia, where other stragglers joined them, totaling 15,000 in all out of an original 40,000 – the rest having been killed or taken prisoner.

After learning of the disaster at Trebia, the Romans grimly set to work raising new armies; in the vivid expression of Polybius, “For the Romans both in public and in private are most to be feared when they stand in real danger.”⁴⁸⁷ Between the survivors and the newly raised forces, the Romans started out with a field force in Italy of as many as 60,000 men if they were divided equally between the two new consuls, Gnaeus Servius and Gaius Flaminius. We know the latter had 30,000 men in his army because he proceeded to lose almost all of them.

Lake Trasimene⁴⁸⁸

After the battle of Trebia, Hannibal contemplated his options as the battle season closed. Deciding to winter in the Po valley where his Celtic allies could supply his army, he would bide his time until spring before moving south. In early spring, Hannibal did so,

⁴⁸⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.74.11 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 57.

⁴⁸⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.75.8.

“τοτε γαρ εισι φοβερωτατοι 'Ρωμαιοι και κοινη και κατ' ιδιαν, οταν αυτους περιστη φοβος αληθινος.”

⁴⁸⁸ See Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 189-197; J. Briscoe, “The Second Punic War”, The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VIII Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C., Second Edition, page 49; B. Caven, The Punic Wars, pages 115-123; A.J. Church, Carthage, pages 206-211; L. Cottrell, Hannibal, pages 99-112; T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 298-314; A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, pages 181-190; D. Head, Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars 359 B.C. to 146 B.C., page 76; S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 92-96 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 60-67.

“Observing that the Celts were dissatisfied at the prosecution of the war in their own territory, but were eagerly looking forward to an invasion of that of the enemy, professedly owing to their hatred of the Romans, but as a fact chiefly in hope of booty...”⁴⁸⁹

Again we must remember a more fundamental explanation: Hannibal’s plan to break up the Roman Alliance System could only be put into execution in peninsular Italy. Given the unreliability of the Gauls, Cisalpine Gaul was not even of particular value as a base area. For that reason, Hannibal lost no real assets as he continued in pursuit of his war objectives in the south.

Hannibal chose a route, which led down into the valley of the river Arno in Etruria. Here too emerges Hannibal’s comprehension of the obvious advantages this route provided to him. The approach allowed him to select one of half a dozen passes across the mountains into the region; and the uncertainty of the route he would choose made it unlikely the Romans could react quickly enough to block his descent. In this way he selected a route that Flaminius would least suspect. Flaminius knew, as did Hannibal that the valley of the Arno, through which Hannibal and his army would have to pass after crossing the Apennines, was still flooded from melting snows and heavy spring rains. While Flaminius presumed it to be impassable, Hannibal’s guides informed him the ground under foot was firm. Risking a daring march, Hannibal’s army passed over the mountains and entered the flooded valley during early to mid-May. For four days they waded through the waters and laboured through the marsh. He had taken particular steps

⁴⁸⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.78.5.

“Θεωρων δε τους Κελτους δυσχεραινοντας επι τω τον πολεμον εν τη παρ’ αυτων χωρα λαμβανειν την τριβην, σπευδοντας δε και μετεωρους οντας εις την πολεμιαν, προφασει μεν δια την προς ’Ρωμαιοις οργην, το δε πλειον δια τας ωφελειας...”

to prevent the Celts from deserting at the first sign of difficulty; and indeed they suffered most severely of all from the privations on this part of the march. Conditions were so bad the soldiers resorted to sleeping on the bodies of pack animals that had died in the waters and Hannibal contracted ophthalmia, losing the sight in his right eye.⁴⁹⁰ But after four days and three nights the Carthaginian army emerged from the swamp on to dry land.⁴⁹¹

Both Polybius and Livy treat Flaminius with exceptional harshness. Polybius calls him "...a thorough mob-courtier and demagogue,"⁴⁹² a point expounded upon at much greater length, complete with horrific omens, by Livy.⁴⁹³ Flaminius, particularly incensed by Hannibal's campaign of destruction through Etruria,⁴⁹⁴ set out in hot pursuit of Hannibal instead of waiting to join forces with Servilius. On the hills surrounding the Chiana Valley, Hannibal outflanked and overtook his army. When the Roman army, which had been expecting to block him, was forced to march after him as he plundered every town on his way, Hannibal decided to lure Flaminius' army to the plains of Tuoro, an ideal site for an ambush. Because of his scouts' accurate information, Polybius describes the dispositions as Hannibal prepared the trap:

"The road led through a narrow strip of level ground with a range of high hills on each side of it lengthwise. This defile was overlooked in front crosswise by a steep hill difficult to climb, and behind it lay the lake, between which and the hillside the passage giving access to the defile was quite narrow. Hannibal

⁴⁹⁰ Cornelius Nepos, Great Generals of Foreign Nations, *Hannibal*, 4.4.3.

⁴⁹¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.79 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 413.

⁴⁹² Polybius, The Histories, 3.80.3. "...οχλοκοπον μεν και δημαγωγον ειναι τελειον," & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 413.

⁴⁹³ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 21.63.

⁴⁹⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.82 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 414-415.

coasting the lake and passing through the defile occupied himself the hill in front, encamping on it with his Spaniards and Africans; his slingers and pikemen he brought round to the front by a detour and stationed them in an extended line under the hills to the right of the defile, and similarly taking his cavalry and the Celts round the hills on the left he placed them in a continuous line under these hills, so that the last of them were just at the entrance to the defile, lying between the hillside and the lake.”⁴⁹⁵

Thinking he was in hot pursuit of Hannibal, Flaminius broke camp early and pressed the Roman troops forward into a rough section of the country.⁴⁹⁶ Hannibal had advanced into the Tuoro through the narrow Malpasso road in the early morning under a thick layer of fog. He positioned his light cavalry and the Celts at the entrance to the valley to block any possible Roman retreat; the Libyans and Iberians protected his camp; the Balearics and Asiati closed the way to the hill of Montigeto. As the Roman vanguard

⁴⁹⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.83.1-4.

“οντος δε κατα την διοδον αυλωνος επιπεδου, τουτου δε παρα μεν τας εις μηκος πλευρας εκατερας βουνους εχοντος υψηλους και συνεχεις, παρα δε τας εις πλατος κατα μεν την αντικρυ λοφον επικειμενον ερυμνον και δυσβατον, κατα δε την απ’ ουρας λιμνην τελειως στενην απολειπουσαν παροδον ως εις τον αυλωνα παρα την παρωρειαν, διελθων τον αυλωνα παρα την λιμνην, τον μεν κατα προσωπον της πορειας λοφον αυτος κατελαβετο, και τους Ίβηρας και τους Λιβυας εχων επ’ αυτου κατεστρατοπεδευσε, τους δε Βαλιαρεις και λογχοφορους κατα την πρωτοπορειαν εκπεριαγων υπο τους εν δεξια βουνους των παρα τον αυλωνα κειμενων, επι πολυ παρατεινας υπεστειλε, τους δ’ ιππεις και τους Κελτους ομοιως των ευωνυμων Βουνων κυκλω περιαγων παρεξετεινε συνεχεις, ωστε τους εσχατους ειναι κατ’ αυτην την εισοδον την παρα τε την λιμνην και τας παρωρειας φερουσαν εις τον προειρημενον τοπον.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 418-419.

⁴⁹⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.83 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 418-419.

began its climb up into the pass, Hannibal – positioned on the high ground all around – gave the signal to close in on the Romans from all sides. From the surrounding hills the Carthaginian cavalry and infantry came down with an enormous impact, engaging the enemy army from all sides.

“The sudden appearance of the enemy took Flaminius completely by surprise, and as the condition of the atmosphere rendered it very difficult to see, and their foes were charging down on them in so many places from higher ground, the Roman Centurions and Tribunes were not only unable to take any effectual measures to set things right, but could not even understand what was happening. They were charged at one and the same instant from the front, from the rear, and from the flanks, so that most of them were cut to pieces in marching order as they were quite unable to protect themselves, and, as it were, betrayed by their commander’s lack of judgment.”⁴⁹⁷

From the preceding passage by Livy it is clear the Romans did not even have time to draw up in their usual battle array. Caught in marching order and laden with packs and gear, they hardly had time to drop their gear and draw their swords.⁴⁹⁸ The fighting

⁴⁹⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.84.2-4.

“οι δε περι τον Φλαμινιον παραδοξου γενομενης αυτοις της επιφανειας, ετι δε δυσσυνοπτου της κατα τον αερα περιστασεως υπαρχουσης, και των πολεμιων κατα πολλους τοπους εξ υπερδεξιου καταφερομενων και προσπιπτοντων, ουχ οιον παραβοηθειν εδυναντο προς τι των δεομενων οι ταξιαρχοι και χιλιαρχοι των 'Ρωμαιων, αλλ' ουδε συννοησαι το γινομενον. αμα γαρ οι μεν κατα προσωπον, οι δ' απ' ουρας, οι δ' εκ των πλαγιων αυτοις προσεπιπτον, διο και συνεβη τους πλειστους εν αυτω τω της πορειας σχηματι κατακοπηναι, μη δυναμενους αυτοις βοηθειν, αλλ' ως αν ει προδεδομενους υπο της του προεστωτος ακρισιας.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 419.

⁴⁹⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.4.

quickly became an entirely disordered melee, with Hannibal's forces having the invaluable double advantage of surprise and visibility. Positioned on the higher ground, above the mist, they could see the Romans while the Romans could not see them. The one exception was the Roman vanguard:

“About six thousand of those in the defile, who had defeated the enemy in their front, were unable to render any assistance to their own army or to get to the rear of their adversaries, as they could not see anything of what was happening, although they might have been of very material service. They simply continued to press forward in the belief that they were sure to meet with someone until they found themselves isolated on the high ground and on reaching the crest of the hill, the mist having now broken, they perceived the extent of the disaster, but were no longer able to help, as the enemy were now completely victorious and in occupation of all the ground.”⁴⁹⁹

Now we see the Celts, in particular the Insubres, take the opportunity to vent their anger in revenge for the defeat inflicted on them by Flaminius in 223. Indeed the Insubrian cavalryman, Decurius, killed Flaminius by hacking his way through the *triarii* drawn up around him and running him through with his spear.⁵⁰⁰ By midday 15,000

⁴⁹⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.84.11-13.

“εξακισχιλιοι δ' ἰσως των κατα τον αυλωνα τους κατα προσωπον νικησαντες παραβοηθειν μεν τοις ιδιοις και περιστασθαι τους υπεναντιους ηδυνατουν, δια το μηδεν συνοραν των γινομενων, καιπερ μεγαλην δυναμενοι προς τα ολα παρεχεσθαι χρειαν· αι δε του προσθεν ορεγομενοι, προηγον πεπεισμενοι συμπεσεισθαι τισιν, εως ελαθον εκπεσοντες προς τους υπερδεξιους τοπους. γενομενοι δ' επι των ακρων, και της ομιχλης ηδη πεπωκυιας, συνεντες το γεγονος ατυχημα, και ποιειν ουδεν οντες ετι δυνατοι δια το τοις ολοις επικρατειν και παντα προκατεχειν ηδη τους πολεμιους, ...” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 420.

⁵⁰⁰ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.6.3-4.

Romans were dead and about 10,000 made prisoner. Other Romans may also have made some organized effort to break out, these being the only ones in a position to do so; presumably they had passed most of the ambush force before the trap was sprung. They retreated a few miles to an Etrurian village where they were surrounded the next day. The following day the 6,000 who had escaped surrendered. In all Hannibal disposed of a force of about 30,000 men – some 15,000 were killed or captured. With a loss of only 1,500 of his own men, Hannibal inflicted a devastating defeat that left Rome without a field army; half the Roman army of 30,000 men were killed, and most of the rest taken prisoner.⁵⁰¹ What a faultless feat Hannibal must have experienced.

Again, we must ask what led Flaminius to send his men into such an utterly dangerous situation? By marching through mist into a natural ambush ground a certain mind-set seems to have been at work here. Flaminius, in hot pursuit, and perhaps fearing any delay in getting his army on the march would allow Hannibal to gain ground on him, made a serious error in judgment and led his men into a perfect trap. He or his advisors must have weighed the possibility of an ambush; it was always a possibility when any army moved through this sort of terrain. Undoubtedly if they anticipated an ambush they must have presumed the risk only a small-scale action; the Roman army would lose less time by hazarding the danger, and fighting its way through than by waiting for the mist to clear and sending out patrols to reconnoitre the road ahead. What Flaminius did not anticipate was the large-scale trap Hannibal executed by the entire army Carthaginian army.

The severe consequences of Flaminius' defeat allowed Hannibal to bring his strategic plan into action. He had smashed one Roman consular army and annihilated

⁵⁰¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.85; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 420 & S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 95.

another. Now, it is crucial to emphasize once again that defeating Roman armies in the field was only a means to his end, not an end in itself. Had Hannibal's objective been simply to defeat Roman armies, he no doubt could have beaten any number of them in Spain, close to his bases of support and in a position to move directly to the defense of Carthage if need be. The experience of the 1st Roman War had shown him the Romans had nearly inexhaustible reserves of manpower and could make good enormous and repeated losses as long as their own city and their recruiting base remained intact. Hannibal had come to Italy to attack either or both and now he was in a position to do just that.

The Winter of 217/216 B.C.

Working his way gradually south along the Adriatic coast, Hannibal devoted much of his effort to reconditioning his army. He had begun his campaign very early in the season; he and his troops had suffered considerably from the cold weather as well as from the march through swamps. The easing of any immediate military pressure after the one-sided victory at Lake Trasimene gave him opportunity to restore his troops, which Polybius describes as suffering from *λιμοψωρος* ["hunger-mange"].⁵⁰² This condition may have been scurvy, though since it afflicted horses even worse than men, general malnutrition is more probable. We are told they cured their itching skin by bathing them in old wine (vinegar?).⁵⁰³ Once more we must note Hannibal's concern for his men and the time he allowed them to recoup.

As the campaign progresses Polybius writes, "He also re-armed the Africans in the Roman fashion with select weapons, being, as he now was, in possession of a very

⁵⁰² Polybius, The Histories, 3.87.2 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 422.

⁵⁰³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.88.1.

large quantity of captured arms.”⁵⁰⁴ This raises the question of the organization and tactics of Hannibal’s heavy infantry. If these troops were *phalangites*, it would be a questionable decision to arm them in the Roman fashion. The armour would have been largely interchangeable with the Roman swords usable by *phalangites* as a secondary weapon, while the Roman *triarii* were armed with spears suitable for Carthaginian *phalangites*. Yet the oblong Roman shields would not be the shield of preference for *phalangites*, and in general the proportions of the captured weapons and equipment would be suitable to re-arming *manipular* troops rather than *phalangites*.

From Polybius’ account of the re-arming we discover that Hannibal’s African regulars must have been trained to fight using something similar to Roman *manipular* tactics. If this is the case, they had done so from the outset or Hannibal reorganized and retrained them. Possibly, having observed the exceptional performance of Roman troops at the battle of Trebia, he concluded that *manipular* tactics were superior to *phalangite* tactics, and already had begun to train his heavy infantry in Roman methods. As veteran regulars, they doubtless had the discipline and experience to make such a change. Though a change such as this would have been exceptionally difficult and risky to carry out while on campaign in hostile territory, when the surviving Roman army under Servilius might appear at any time. The alternate possibility we must consider being that at least some of Hannibal’s heavy infantry already were trained in Roman-type tactics at the beginning of the war.

We might consider at this point Hannibal’s policy regarding prisoners of war. After Lake Trasimene he took action that resembled what he had done earlier after

⁵⁰⁴ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.87.3.

“μετακαθώπλισε δε τους Λιβυας εις τον ‘Ρωμαικον τροπον εκλεκτοις οπλοις, ως αν γεγονως κυριος τοσoutων σκυλων.” & Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 22.46.4.

Trebia,⁵⁰⁵ releasing prisoners who were from Rome's allies. After Trasimene, the Roman captives were put under close guard, but Polybius explains, in "...setting all the allies free, sent them to their homes, adding, as on a previous occasion [i.e., after Trebia], that he [Hannibal] was not come to fight with the Italians, but with the Romans for the freedom of Italy."⁵⁰⁶ What better way to show the Italian confederation his dispute was only with the citizens of Rome?

Once more he crossed the Apennines, this time moving from west to east, lead his army into southern Italy. For here, among the Samnites and other peoples whose opposition to Roman rule was still a thing of recent memory, Hannibal sought his potential allies and the means to secure Rome's undoing. After resting at Pescara, later in the summer they resumed their march and moved south into Apulia, devastating the fertile countryside as they went.

How is this policy of destruction to be squared with Hannibal's treatment of allied prisoners of war, or with his broader political objective of driving a wedge between Rome and her Italian allies? To some degree, devastation was the inevitable consequence of the passage of an army that had as yet no means to supply itself except by foraging – the forcible requisition of provision from the countryside. The process almost inevitably produces violent encounters between the foraging troops and local population attempting

⁵⁰⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.77 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 410-412.

⁵⁰⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.85.3-4.

"...διδωκεν εις φυλακην επι τα ταγματα, τους δε συμμαχους απελυσε χωρις λυτρων απαντας εις την οικειαν, επιφεγξαμενος τον αυτον ον και προσθεν λογον οτι παρεστι πολεμησων ουκ 'Ιταλιωταις, αλλα 'Ρωμαιοις υπερ της 'Ιταλιωτων ελευθεριας." & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol.I, page 419.

to defend food stores. To this must be added the impulse of soldiers to loot, rape, kill, and to destroy what they cannot carry off when passing through territory perceived as hostile. Perhaps Hannibal felt a need to assuage the impulse of the Gauls toward plunder, given their disorderly reputation and the fact that they –unlike the troops who had come with him from Spain – had a realistic prospect of deserting and returning home if they grew dissatisfied.

When Fabius caught up with the Carthaginians in Apulia, Hannibal immediately drew up his army for battle.⁵⁰⁷ But we are told Fabius, in accord with his new strategy, ignored the challenge and deliberately kept his army to the mountainous terrain above Hannibal's line of march. Although he periodically sent out small detachments to attack Carthaginian foraging parties, he would be drawn no further; this served to deplete Hannibal's forces and to gradually rebuild the Roman military's confidence.⁵⁰⁸ Hannibal had no option but to supply his army by foraging, which meant a continual attrition so long as the Roman army was able to descend in force on isolated parties of his foragers; he had to keep his army on the move.⁵⁰⁹ Such a stratagem was a new development and clearly not in accord with Hannibal's need to draw the Romans into another pitched

⁵⁰⁷ See J. Briscoe, "The Second Punic War", The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VIII Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C., Second Edition, pages 49-51 & A.J. Church, Carthage, pages 212-217. See B. Caven, The Punic Wars, pages 122-132 and S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 97-101 for a detailed examination of Fabius' actions.

⁵⁰⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 3.89.

⁵⁰⁹ While on the march, Hannibal targeted Roman lands for devastation, ostensibly to feed his troops, but also to demoralize the Romans. As stated by Machiavelli, "Thus when Hannibal had ravaged and burned all the towns and country around Rome, he spared the estate of Fabius Maximus alone;..." to raise the ire of the Romans against the Dictator. N. Machiavelli, The Art of War, rev. trans. of E. Farnsworth (New York, 1965), originally published in 1521, page 173.

battle. Above all, he needed to force confrontation as frequently as possible to exploit the tactical superiority of his own army and prevent the developing situation of an exhausting war of attrition. Nonetheless, “the Romans continued to hang on their rear at a distance of one or two days’ march, refusing to approach nearer and engage the enemy.”⁵¹⁰

Next we need to consider the aspect of the mere size of the Carthaginian force. Equivalent in numbers to the population of a fair-sized city and coupled with the numerous cavalry horses Hannibal’s contingent required a enormous and continual supply of food and fodder. The population density of the Italian plains at this period in time was on the order of 100 people per square mile;⁵¹¹ this is broadly equivalent to saying that one square mile of typical land produced enough to feed 100 people for a year. Hannibal’s army, with a strength at that time of some 30,000 men, would quickly exhaust the products of about one square mile of farmland each day, to which we must add grain or pasture for as many as 10,000 horses – a nearly equivalent burden. The actual supply problem would be even greater through much of the campaign season since until the harvest supplies would have to come from the previous season’s stores, more than likely already consumed through the winter by the local population. Theoretically, in a single week Hannibal’s army could fully denude the supply capacity of over seven square miles of land; in a couple of months, more than sixty square miles of land – in practice, as much as two or three time that amount; hence, in the short term, the need to send foragers to a considerable distance, and in the longer term to move on into a new district. Hannibal’s army exacted an enormous cost on the lands it passed through.

⁵¹⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 3.90.9.

“Οἱ δὲ Ῥωμαῖοι κατοπιν μὲν εἶποντο συνεχῶς, μίας καὶ δυεῖν ἡμερῶν ὁδὸν ἀπεχόντες, ἐγγίζειν γέ μιν καὶ συμπλεκεσθαι τοῖς πολεμίοις οὐχ οἷοι τ’ ἦσαν.”

⁵¹¹ T.J. Cornell, The Beginnings of Rome, pages 205-207.

Hannibal, with Fabius in distant pursuit, reached the wealthy plain of Capua, only to be frustrated in his hopes of breaking any of the cities there loose from Rome. Fabius did not descend into the plain to meet Hannibal, but kept his army in the surrounding foothills. Hannibal determined to withdraw from the plain of Capua since it was not suited for winter quarters given that its agricultural mix was not particularly well suited to maintaining an army. Describing the difficulties Hannibal faced Livy describes Capua, "...though a land of plenty for the time being, could not support him permanently, being taken up with orchards and vineyards, and planted everywhere with agreeable rather than necessary fruits."⁵¹²

Fabius guessed correctly that Hannibal intended to withdraw toward Samnium, following the same route by which he had entered the plain. For Fabius the idea that he could set up a large-scale ambush in hilly country became his plan of action. It is obvious that he hoped to use the rough ground to minimize Hannibal's superior cavalry force. If Polybius' depiction is accurate his disposition is strikingly similar to Hannibal's at Lake Trasimene:

"Seeing that owing to its narrowness the place was exceedingly favourable for delivering an attack, [Fabius] stationed about four thousand men at the actual pass, bidding them act at the proper time with all spirit, while availing themselves

⁵¹² Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 22.15.2. "... quia ea regio praesentis erat copiae, non perpetuae, arbusta vineaeque et consita omnia magis amoenis quam necessariis fructibus." For a very full treatment on the subject of supplying an army with its essentials, see P. Erdkamp, *Hunger and the Sword: Warfare and Food Supply in Roman Republican Wars (264-30 B.C.)* (London, 1998)

fully of the advantage of the ground. He himself with the greater part of his army encamped on a hill in front of the pass and overlooking it.”⁵¹³

Polybius further asserts Fabius hoped at least to recover some of the booty,

“...and possibly to put an end to the whole campaign owing to the great advantage his position gave him. He was in fact entirely occupied in considering at what point and how he should avail himself of local conditions, and with what troops he should attack, and from which direction.”⁵¹⁴

More than likely Polybius used the description of Fabius’ plan to evoke Hannibal’s masterful use of terrain, as well as to state Polybius’ conception of good generalship. Against a lesser general, the plan might have succeeded, but Hannibal was no lesser general. In a deviously brilliant ploy he selected two thousand cattle – part of the booty taken in the campaign – and tied bundles of dry wood to their horns. That night, as the cattle were driven into the narrows of the pass, Hannibal’s light infantry accompanied them followed by the rest of his army. As they approached the ambush point, they set the wood on the cattle’s horns alight and then stampeded the cattle through

⁵¹³ Polybius, The Histories, 3.92.10-11. “...

θεωρων τους τοπους στενους οντας και καθ’ υπερβολην ευφυεις προς επιθεσιν, επ’ αυτης μεν της διεκβολης περι τετρακισχιλιους επεστησε, παρακαλεσας χρησησθαι τη προθυμια συν καιρω μετα της των τοπων ευφυιας, αυτος δε το πολυ μέρος εχων της δυναμεως, επι τινα λοφον υπερδεξιον προ των στενων κατεστρατοπεδευσε.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 429.

⁵¹⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.93.1-2.

“...τοις ολοις περας επιθησιν δια την των τοπων ευκαιριαν. και δη περι ταυτα και προς τουτοις εγινετο τοις διαβουλοις, διανοουμενος πη και πως χρησησεται τοις τοποις και τινες και ποθεν πρωτον εγχειρησουσι τοις υπεναντιοις.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 429.

the pass. “But when [the Romans] got near the oxen they were entirely puzzled by the lights, fancying that they were about to encounter something much more formidable than the reality.”⁵¹⁵ Some confused skirmishing followed between Hannibal’s light troops and the ambush force. But for whatever reason Fabius held back his main force, whether it was fear of a trap or the uncertainty of its possible nature, Hannibal’s entire army broke through.⁵¹⁶

Having been informed that the region around the town of Geronium was highly suitable to winter, Hannibal struck out for northern Apulia.⁵¹⁷ Subsequent political tensions in Rome and within the Roman army came to a head. Although Fabius had been successful in preserving the Roman army from another disastrous defeat and by maintaining a Roman presence in the regions attacked by Hannibal, he had dissuaded restive allies from rebellion by demonstrating that Roman power was unbroken, he had done little to check Hannibal. Although summoned back to Rome ostensibly on religious matters, in reality Fabius had been recalled to face a Senate becoming vocal in its condemnation of his strategy. It was at this time that the pejorative epithet *Cunctator* [Delayer] first surfaced to describe Fabius.⁵¹⁸

M. Minucius Rufus, Fabius’ *Magister Equitum* [Master of Horse] had been left to trail Hannibal’s army as it attacked and took the town of Geronium.

⁵¹⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.94.2.

“εγγιζοντες δε τοις βουσιν ηπορουντο δια τα φωτα, μειζον το του συμβαινοντος και δεινότερον αναπλαττοντες και προσδοκωντες.”

⁵¹⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.94 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 430.

⁵¹⁷ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal’s War, pages 71-72.

⁵¹⁸ L. Keppie, The Making of the Roman Army From the Republic to Empire, page 26 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal’s War, pages 67-68.

“On reaching Geronium, which is two hundred stades from Luceria, he at first sent messages to the inhabitants asking for their alliance and offering pledges of the advantages he promised them, but as they paid no attention to them he began the siege. He soon took the city, upon which he put the inhabitants to the sword, but kept the walls and most of the houses uninjured, intending to use them as corn magazines for the winter.”⁵¹⁹

At Geronium Hannibal’s again offered Rome’s ally the choice to join him. When they refused he proceeded to lay waste to the population as a warning to other cities. Although he had a base and supply of provisions, Hannibal continued foraging operations presumably to avoid as long as possible the need to draw down his stores on hand. When the Roman army, now under the Minucius, drew near “Hannibal, seeing the approach of the Romans, left the third part of his army to forage, and taking the other two-thirds advanced sixteen stades from the town and encamped on a hill with the view of overawing the enemy and affording protection to the foragers.”⁵²⁰ With the arrival of

⁵¹⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.100.3-4.

“αφικομενος δε προς το Γερουνιον, ο της Λουκαριας απεχει διακοσια σταδια, τας μεν αρχας δια λογων τους ενοικουντας εις φιλιαν προυκαλειτο και πιστεις εδιδου των επαγγελιων, ουδενος δε προσεχοντος, πολιορκειν επεβαλετο. ταχυ δε γενομενος κυριος, τους μεν οικητορας κατεφθειρε, τας δε πλειστας οικιας ακεραιους διεφυλαξε και τα τειχη, βουλομενος σιτοβολιοις χρησασθαι προς την παραχειμασιαν.”

⁵²⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 3.101.4.

“Αννιβας δε θεωρων εγγιζοντας τους πολεμιους, το μεν τριτον μερος της δυναμεως ειασε σιτολογειν, τα δε δυο μερη λαβων και προελθων απο της πολεως εκκαιδεκα σταδιους προς τους πολεμιους, επι τινος βουνου κατεστρατοπεδευσε, βουλομενος αμα μεν καταπληξασθαι τους υπεναντιους, αμα δε τοις σιτολογουσι την ασφαλειαν παρασκευαζειν.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 433-434.

Minucius, for the first time since arriving in Italy, Hannibal allowed himself to be uncharacteristically be drawn into a severe skirmish, which netted the Roman Master of Horse a minor victory.⁵²¹ By the time the news reached Rome it had become inflated into a major success. To a population grown weary of defeat and disenchanted with Fabius' strategy they seized upon his success, particularly those who advocated an offensive policy. As a reward, and no doubt as a deliberate attempt to impair Fabius, Minucius was raised to equal Fabius.⁵²² Livy gives an extended account of these political developments,⁵²³ with his usual anti-populist rhetoric directed at Gaius Terentius Varro, the supposed author of the bill making Minucius co-dictator.

Polybius expresses in a noteworthy observation, "When Minucius was informed of his popularity at home and the office given him by the people's decree, he grew twice as eager to run risks and take some bold action against the enemy."⁵²⁴ In any event, the Roman commanders now cooperated uneasily. Contrary to the usual Roman practice of alternating in command, they divided the army into two sections, one commanded by Fabius, the other by Minucius, and encamped a couple of miles apart. In an attempt to take on Hannibal near Geronium, Minucius and his half of the army were nearly destroyed, being saved only by the timely intervention of Fabius. Minucius agreed to

⁵²¹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.18.10.

⁵²² Polybius, The Histories, 3.103 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 434.

⁵²³ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.25-26.

⁵²⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.103.5.

“τω δε Μαρκω διασαφηθεισης της τε του πληθους ευνοιας και της παρα του δημου δεδομενης αρχης αυτω, διπλασιως παρωρμηθη προς το παραβαλλεσθαι και κατατολμαν των πολεμιων.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 434.

reunite the forces and as the year was now advanced beyond the campaigning season, both armies retired to their fortified camps for the winter.⁵²⁵

Altogether to campaign year 217 B.C. must have been seriously disappointing to Hannibal as a military commander with access to much of the Roman alliances in Etruria. Although he had followed up his initial success at Trebia at the beginning of the campaign season by inflicting a shattering defeat on the consular army at Lake Trasimene, the Romans tenaciously remained in the field. This was perhaps partly because while he had evaded the trap Fabius had attempted to set, he was unable to turn the outcome to his positive advantage. It is nonetheless true that Minucius at one point demonstrated the grave perils potentially facing Hannibal's army in a hostile country without real allies or a secure base. Even if Minucius subsequently blundered, the persistent image of Fabius rescuing him without any serious Roman loss is an influential impression. Above all, Hannibal's operations were so far without the desired political effect. Except in Cisalpine Gaul, the spectacle of his victories to date had not produced any fissures in the Roman Alliance System. However, all of these circumstances pale with the battle to come.

⁵²⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.105.8-11 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 434; Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.30

Cannae⁵²⁶

Early in the summer of 216, the shortage of provisions was probably decisive in determining Hannibal's move from his camp at Geronium south into an area where the harvests had already begun to ripen. As he moved into the area he proceeded to occupy the citadel of a town called Cannae, a Roman collection point for corn, grain, produce, sheep and other supplies from the district around Canusium. Although the town had been reduced to ruins the year before, the supplies stored in the citadel were conveyed to the Roman camp as needed.⁵²⁷ Hannibal's capture of the citadel coupled with the Roman loss of these much-needed supplies caused great concern for the Roman army. But most of all the real concern for Rome came from the fact that Carthage now controlled the surrounding district.

Campaigning specifically on the promise of a brilliant plan for achieving a swift, decisive victory over Hannibal, L. Aemilius Paullus and C. Terrentius Varro won the consular elections of 216. The Senate determined to bring eight legions into the field, which had never been done before, with each legion consisting of five thousand men with an equal number of allies. The Romans usually enrolled four legions per year, each consisting of about four thousand infantry and two hundred cavalry and when necessity

⁵²⁶ Among the dozens of books and hundreds of accounts of the Battle of Cannae, the following are of particular use: G.P. Baker, Hannibal, pages 128-149; Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 209-217; B. Caven, The Punic Wars, pages 133-141; A.J. Church, Carthage, pages 218-224; L. Cottrell, Hannibal, pages 126-145; H. Delbrück, Warfare in Antiquity, trans. W.J. Renfroe (Lincoln, NE, 1990), originally published in 1920, pages 315-335; T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 360-380; A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, pages 197-214; D. Head, Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars 359 B.C. to 146 B.C., page 77; M. Healy, Cannae 216 B.C., Campaign Series No. 36 (London, 1994), pages 67-85; S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 103-109 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 74-86.

⁵²⁷ S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 105.

arose, they raised the number of infantry to five thousand and cavalry to three hundred. Of allies, the number in each legion was the same as that of the citizens, but of cavalry three times as great. Of the four legions thus composed, they assigned two to each of the consuls for whatever service was ongoing – most of their wars were decided by one consul and two legions, with their quota of allies (thus two citizen legions and two allied legions combined); and they rarely employed all four at one time and in one battle. Yet, on this occasion, they resolved to bring not only four but eight legions into the field (eight citizen legions and eight allied legions combined – about 90,000 men.⁵²⁸ Although Livy considers Polybius to have exaggerated the number,⁵²⁹ they both agree the consuls promised the overwhelming force would carry the day.

Ancient sources as noted above often disagree as to the accuracy of the numbers involved in various engagements where evidence is scanty, which makes Polybius' figures subject to question: "The Carthaginian cavalry numbered about ten thousand, and their infantry, including the Celts, did not much exceed forty thousand."⁵³⁰ Though in this instance Livy agrees with his figures.⁵³¹ Polybius is quite clear that Hannibal had 8,000 slingers and javelineers in his skirmishing line, 20,000 infantry in his main line, and 10,000 cavalry on the flanks. The only doubt is whether Mago's 1,000 foot and 1,000 horse are to be added to the total or not. If they are, over 9,000 Celtic infantry and 5,000

⁵²⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 3.107.9 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 441.

⁵²⁹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.36.1-2.

⁵³⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 3.114.5.

“ην δε το μεν των ιππικων πληθος το συμπαν τοις Καρχηδονιοις εις μυριους, το δε των πεζων ου πολυ πλειους τετρακισμυριων συν τοις Κελτοις.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 445-446.

⁵³¹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.46.

cavalry had joined him, allowing for some losses in previous operations. Nevertheless, the ancient historians agree the odds were almost two to one in favour of the Romans. It is also important to note, the consuls assumed the Carthaginians could not beat the Roman army in open combat; this time they would bring the battle onto an open field. At Cannae, the field was indeed wide open – with no possibility of surprise. With Roman front so much wider than the Carthaginian front, Hannibal must surely be flanked. The idea that they would bring the fox out into the open where they could decide the play of battle seemed to have brought the desired results.

Dawn of that August morning in 216 B.C. found Hannibal peering down at the plain separating his vantage point from the Adriatic Sea some three miles away. The Romans faced southwest, with their right wing resting on the Aufidus River and with the sea about three miles to their rear.⁵³² Determined to crush Hannibal's center, the Romans formed exceptionally deep battle lines in order to bring maximum pressure to bear against the middle of the Carthaginian line. On the Roman right, the legion cavalry, some 2,400 strong, faced Hannibal's Iberian and Celtic horse, totaling 7,000. This match would prove a decisive element in the battle's surprising outcome. On the Roman left, the 4,000 allied cavalry faced an equal number of Numidians.

But Hannibal had a design of his own. He proceeded to relying on the elasticity of his formation, he first masked his moves as he drew up his army and aligned his infantry in an unusual manner, placing his light slingers and spearmen at the front. The center of his position was convex, facing outward toward the advancing Romans. The wings bent backward from the center. Alternating units of Spanish and Celtic swordsmen held this convex line, and they were greatly outnumbered by the oncoming Romans. Hannibal positioned himself at the left end of the line, and his brother Mago held the right. Each

⁵³² S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 105.

end of the line was anchored by a dense square of African infantry, the location of which ensured that they would not be engaged until long after those at the center. On his left wing he stationed his Celtic and Spanish heavy cavalry, on the right he stationed his light Numidian cavalry. Preparing the battle, he now ordered his light troops at the front to fall back and act as reserves.

The Romans unaware of Hannibal's intentions acted as usual and drove in hard, using their superior infantry to best advantage. The *velites* or *leves*⁵³³ were positioned at the front to cover their position. Behind them, in the center the main body of the legion took its position, with allied Italian infantry on either side of it. They had their *velites* or *leves* fall back and ploughed into the enemy with their heavy infantry. The crescent of Celtic and Spanish swordsmen buckled and retreated. On the Roman right wing stood the Roman cavalry, on the left wing was the allied cavalry. As the Romans advanced, a hot west wind blew dust in their faces and obscured their vision. At a range of about 35 yards, the Romans hurled their light javelins, causing Spanish and Celtic casualties. These *pila* often caused problems even if they only penetrated a man's shield, because the shaft was difficult to remove and weighed the shield down, making the man vulnerable to an oncoming legionary.

At closer range, the heavy *pilum* was thrown, and then the infantry lines crashed together, the agile Celts and acrobatic Spaniards against the disciplined Roman masses. In time, the weight of the Roman assault began to take effect on Hannibal's troops, and the center of the Carthaginian line receded. As Hannibal's men were forced back, they found themselves slowly backing up a slope. The top of the slope formed a "U" if viewed from above, the Spaniards and Celts now formed a concave line that conformed to that "U",

⁵³³ It is not known for certain whether the Romans had changed the *leves* to *velites* by the Battle of Cannae. Both were skirmishers so the difference is only semantics for my purposes.

with the African squares still anchored to their original position at the tips. Due to the nature of the terrain, the Romans fought uphill as they advanced and at the same time were restricted into a narrowing front as their mass of men entered the "U". To the Romans this appeared to be due to their powerful drive into the opponents lines. In fact the troops had been told to retreat. When the Romans advanced, with most of their strength in the center, Hannibal gave way before them. The Roman front closed around the Carthaginian infantry and it indeed looked as though Rome would win.

The Roman infantry kept on driving into the Carthaginian lines. Forcing them back, they still felt confident that they were winning. Although the Roman infantrymen did not know it, their fate was all but sealed by this time. Hannibal had ingeniously planned for his cavalry to strike the decisive blows while his infantry fought a large-scale delaying action. As the battle opened, Hannibal launched the Spanish and Celtic cavalry on his left against the outnumbered Roman horse. The consul Aemilius accompanied these cavalrymen, who could not withstand the weight of the Carthaginian assault. Aemilius was wounded and the bulk of the Roman horse was driven from the field, uncovering that flank of the Roman army. While this occurred on the Carthaginian left, the Numidians on the right had been inconclusively engaged with the horsemen of Rome's allies. But as they shunted forward the opponent withdrew, the light infantry on the Carthaginian side, though staying stationary, as it was not withdrawing, began to emerge on the Roman flanks.

The Carthaginian light troops pulled back at the beginning had by now taken position at the rear of the crescent as well to each side of the crescent. Hasdrubal, Hannibal's Carthaginian cavalry commander on the left, reorganized his units and proceeded to ride behind the Roman infantry to the far side of the battlefield, where the stalemated cavalry fight continued between the Numidians and Rome's allies. No sooner

had the Roman front lines commenced their attack on the Carthaginian center than the Carthaginian heavy cavalry commanded by Sosylos rushed the horsemen on the Roman right flank. The Roman infantry had continued to drive forward, and had driven itself into an alley formed by the light Carthaginian infantry stationed at the sides. Shielded by these Carthaginian troops, Sosylos' cavalry went around the rear of the Roman infantry; joined the Numidian cavalry commanded by Maharbal; and engaged the enemy's left-flank cavalry.

Faced with Carthaginians on all sides, the Roman and allied cavalry fled the field. Though their commander, consul Varro, escaped most of the Roman horsemen rode sluggish mounts and were unable to dodge the repeated Carthaginian attacks. At this point Aemilius was dead or dying, and Varro, the other commander, no longer was with the Roman army. The Roman and allied cavalymen had been killed, captured or driven from the field. The Numidians were in pursuit of the allied horsemen, leaving the Celts and Spaniards as the only effective cavalry force in the area. The Roman right flank was left defenseless.

By that time, the Roman infantry had fought its way up the slope and into the enclosed end of the "U", the point. As the men became more tightly paced into a confined space, fewer of them could use their weapons effectively. Romans in the rear ranks continued to push forward, but found they had little room to manoeuvre. The prevailing winds continued to blow dust in the faces of the advancing legionaries, making it difficult for them to appreciate their danger. Stripped of both its flanks, the Roman infantry formed a wedge that drove deeper and deeper into the Carthaginian semicircle. At this moment, the African square anchoring the Carthaginian flanks turned inward and advanced to further constrict the Roman infantry. Hasdrubal assaulted the Roman rear with his heavy cavalry, assisted by the Carthaginian light infantry. The encirclement was

complete. Hannibal's infantry surrounded its enemy on three sides – and the Carthaginian cavalry closed the circle in the Roman rear. Rome's doomed legions were encircled and being attacked from all sides.

Many Romans first discovered the danger when they felt the searing pain of being hamstrung by the knives and swords of the Balearic slingers. The courage of the Roman soldier was amply demonstrated – the legions fought on even though all hope was gone. Pressed tightly together and hence unable to properly use their arms, the Romans were surrounded; trapped, with nowhere to retreat, the Roman lines dissolved into chaos. It was no longer a fair fight: the trapped Roman soldiers were massacred.

Of the original force Polybius estimates the dead at 70,000 and prisoners at over 10,000; Livy acknowledges 47,000 dead among the infantry, 2,700 in the cavalry, and estimates the number of prisoners at 19,000.⁵³⁴ About 17,000 Romans took refuge in two fortified camps nearby, but after further resistance cost 2,000 more fatalities, the remaining 15,000 surrendered. In all, over 72,000 Romans were dead or captured – 80 percent of the entire army. Carthaginian losses were less than 6,000, 4,000 of them suffered by the Celts, no great loss as others could be persuaded to join Hannibal's army as a way to avenge their fallen comrades.⁵³⁵ The survivors were placed in two special legions and forced to remain under service for the duration of the war as a punishment for their failure.⁵³⁶

For a reassessment of how analogous battles such as Cannae can have a comparable outcome when led by an accomplished general, we turn to 'Lee's

⁵³⁴ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.51-59.

⁵³⁵ S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 108.

⁵³⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.113-116 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius. Vol. I. pages 443-448; Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.42-50 and J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 77-86.

Masterpiece', Chancellorsville. Just as the Roman Senate decided to send an overwhelming force against Hannibal at Cannae, General Joseph Hooker reorganized the Union Army of the Potomac, trained it, and grew it to 130,000 men to strike Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Hooker would not hurl his massive army head-on against the formidable Fredericksburg defenses; instead, he would deploy about one-third of his forces under General John Sedgwick to make a diversionary attack across the Rappahannock above Lee's Fredericksburg entrenchments, while he personally led another third of the army in a long swing up the Rappahannock, coming around to attack Lee on his vulnerable left flank and rear. Except for about 10,000 cavalry troops under General George Stoneman, who would disrupt Lee's lines of communication to Richmond, the remainder of the Army of the Potomac would be prudently held in reserve in Chancellorsville, ready for use to reinforce either Sedgwick's or Hooker's wings as needed.

The plan seemed certain to send Lee falling back to Richmond in defeat. The first part of the plan unfolded beautifully. By April 30, 1863, Hooker had established about 70,000 men in Chancellorsville and had set up headquarters in a plantation home outside of town called Chancellor House. Hooker then dispatched his cavalry to cut the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad.

The trouble with Hooker's plan is that Robert E. Lee immediately grasped it and understood it as well as Hooker – maybe better. Like Hannibal, Lee commanded less than half the number available to Hooker. He did not direct his attention to Hooker's cavalry; instead, he used his own cavalry under General J.E.B. Stuart to control the roads in and out of Chancellorsville. Unable to send patrols out, Hooker was effectively blinded; he could not tell where the Confederates were. Worried and confused, he deployed his men defensively instead of advancing to his chosen battlefield about 12 miles east of town. In

the meantime, having concluded from Stuart's reconnaissance that Hooker intended to attack him from the flank and rear, Lee sent 10,000 men under Jubal Early to delay the Union troops at Fredericksburg, while he led the remainder of his army against Hooker at Chancellorsville.

Then Lee hit on an even bolder and riskier plan. As he had done against Pope at the Second Battle of Bull Run, Lee flouted accepted military doctrine by dividing his army in the presence of the enemy. He proposed to divide his army, giving 26,000 men to Jackson for the surprise attack against Hooker's flank and retaining 17,000 to hold attacks against Hooker's front. Early's portion would continue to hold the Union troops at Fredericksburg.

In broad daylight, Jackson had to move 26,000 men across the Union front, no more than two-and-a-half miles away. Even with Stuart in control of the roads, pickets with the Union Corps under General Howard saw Jackson's movement; nevertheless, they were unable to persuade Howard or Hooker that this represented any great danger. Just two hours before dusk on May 2, Jackson attacked Howard, in command of Hooker's right flank. The results were devastating.

This was just the beginning of a battle so brilliantly planned that military historians have called it "Lee's Masterpiece." Fighting went on through May 4th, by which time Hooker, in full retreat, had withdrawn all of his troops north of the Rappahannock. The cost to Hooker was staggering. He had faced an army less than half the size of his – a ragtag army: tired, ill fed, and poorly equipped. Against this force, he lost 17,000 men, as well as the chance for a decisive Union victory. Union morale plummeted. Lee saw that the victory of Chancellorsville had raised the spirits of the South, even as they continued to lose food, money, and men.

As demonstrated in the above scenario, it is my assertion that Rome had relied solely on the superiority of its legionnaires, having lined them up and told them to advance. No use had been made of the superior numbers, other than to simply add more ranks onto the back of the advancing columns. As the Carthaginian units manoeuvred, nothing was done to counter their actions. One simply did what one had always done – advance. Hannibal thus turned the Romans' usual strength in battle against them, not only on the large-scale level of overall tactical deployment and movement, but on the micro-level of the tempo of action and the Roman soldiers' ingrained assumption of what they expected to happen in battle. One part of Hannibal's tactical genius lay in realizing that this very steadfastness, the fact that Roman battles were won by outlasting the enemy rather than sudden shock, made them more vulnerable to surprises sprung on them when battle was already underway. The Battle of Cannae served as a classic example of a double-envelopment manoeuvre, a way for an inferior force to defeat a superior force on open terrain.

The Battle of Cannae was a blow to Rome's military in the largest possible scale and can be partly attributed to the Roman practice of rotating consular command on alternate days. The implication by both Livy and Polybius being Varro and Paulus never discussed the possible battle plan for they have the two consuls falling out over exactly these matters within sight of the enemy. Polybius tells us that Varro broke camp and ordered an advance on the enemy in spite of strong protests by Paullus.⁵³⁷ Paulus, the two proconsuls, Servilius and Atilius, were killed, as was Minucius, eighty senators, two quaestors, and twenty-nine tribunes in the ensuing battle.⁵³⁸ Cannae left Rome effectively

⁵³⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.113 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 443-445.

⁵³⁸ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.49.6-11.

without an army in the field; the Romans had thrown practically everything they had at Hannibal, and he destroyed nearly all. Terentius Varro, together with a thousand allied cavalry escaped to Venusia some thirty miles from Cannae. Polybius comments "...[he] disgraced himself by his flight and in his tenure of office had been most unprofitable to his country."⁵³⁹ Astonishingly when Varro ultimately reached Rome, a crowd solemnly thanked him "...because he had not despaired of the state."⁵⁴⁰

By the time of the battle of Cannae, it is clear that Hannibal had succeeded in welding together these disparate horsemen into a highly trained and disciplined body of cavalry. Testimony to this comes in the battle itself when in the midst of combat he could rein in his Celtic and Spanish cavalry and redirect them to another part of the battlefield. The encirclement was a remarkable feat in itself for Hannibal had little more than 40,000 men while Rome had close to 90,000. About 60-70,000 of the Roman force was killed outright another 10,000 fought their way out of the trap while the rest were taken prisoner. Hannibal had lost 4,000 Celts, 1,500 Spanish and African troops and about 200 Numidian cavalry.⁵⁴¹

The Carthaginian army reached Italy reduced to 20,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry; since it fought at Trebia with 30,000 infantry and over 10,000 cavalry, Polybius implicitly assumes that at least 10,000 infantry and four thousand cavalry had been

⁵³⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.116.13.

"...ὁ τῶν Ῥωμαίων στρατηγός, ἀνὴρ αἰσχρὰν μὲν τὴν φύγην, ἀλυσίτελῃ δὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν αὐτοῦ τῇ πατρίδι πεποιημένος." & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 448.

⁵⁴⁰ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.61.14.

⁵⁴¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.117.6. On the dramatic differences in casualties, see P. Sabin, "The Mechanics of Battle in the Second Punic War", *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal*, BICS Supplement 67, 1996, pages 64-77.

recruited from the Cisalpine Gauls. By Cannae, the infantry strength had grown to 40,000 requiring at minimum an additional 10,000 recruits, plus enough more to make up losses in the earlier battles. Hannibal's infantry at Cannae would be at least half made up of Cisalpine Gauls. Livy gives no overall strength for the army at Trebia; only that it included 10,000 cavalry – one of the more consistent figures in this whole reckoning – and supposedly 8,000 Balearic slingers. The last is surely an error, since it is implausible that slingers, light infantry, would have made up such a large proportion of Hannibal's non-Gallic forces. Most likely, Livy misinterpreted Polybius' assertion that the army as it entered Italy had 8,000 Iberian infantry of all sorts.⁵⁴² In any case, by the time of Cannae, Livy agrees with Polybius that Hannibal's army totals 40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. However, if he takes seriously Cincius Alimentus' figures, then the Gauls recruited in Italy may have almost melted away again; at least, the army has been reduced from 80,000 infantry to 40,000.

Although the ancient historians provide discrepancies in determining the strength of Hannibal's army, it is simply too important to be brushed aside. Hannibal commanded an army whose main motive had initially been the acquisition of plunder, an army without emotional or ideological commitment to the Carthaginian cause. He earned the fidelity and love of his men by his personal qualities alone. Considering the heterogeneous army, the extraordinary hardships it underwent, the struggling against certain defeat, the toils and privation, that Hannibal was able to hold together this army for such a length of time was perhaps even more remarkable than his battlefield victories and testifies to the intense charisma he possessed. With his mercenary army he achieved some of the most dramatic victories in military history. It was not that Hannibal's soldiers were better

⁵⁴² Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.56 & F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, pages 391-393.

fighters than the Roman, but that Hannibal possessed extraordinary ability both as a tactician and a leader.⁵⁴³

News of the catastrophe at Cannae shook Rome to its very core. Even so the Roman Senate moved rapidly to assert social discipline by forbidding public mourning or demonstrations of distress within the city. Taking the defeat as evidence of divine disfavour, they ordered a Celtic male and female along with a Greek male and female buried alive to placate the gods. Of most immediate concern was the need to create a new army and the Senate took unprecedented steps to provide troops for this new army. They raised two new legions from an emergency levy, two more being manned with purchased slaves; the Senate released 6,000 debtors and criminals from prison, their military service to be taken in lieu of sentence. However, when Hannibal offered to ransom Roman prisoners taken at Cannae, the Senate stated it had no use for such men. Survivors of Cannae who had retreated to Canusium made up the equivalent of two additional legions. These were then marched to join a legion dispatched earlier to guard northern Campania and act as a blocking force should Hannibal choose to move to attack Rome.

In Hannibal's finest hour, he forced the Romans to learn a painful lesson. The Battle of Cannae in the summer of 216 B.C. remains a milestone in ancient history for it is after Cannae that Rome began to recognize the necessity for continuity of command against Hannibal. As Hannibal met Rome's strongest army on this site, Rome's vaunted tenacity and soldiery were expected to prove decisive despite the Carthaginians' recent victories. The Roman legions were perhaps the finest military units of their day. Yet although their methods of fighting, training, and equipment were highly sophisticated and

⁵⁴³ T.A. Dodge, The Great Captains: The Art of War in the Campaigns of Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon (New York, 1995), originally published in 1889, page 71.



equally effective, an army alone, no matter how devastating, will not win battles. It stands or falls with its commander and the long line of brilliant Roman military leaders largely rose from the lessons learnt against Hannibal in these first two years of war. Had Rome not lost in such an overwhelming disaster the changes necessary for their eventual victory over Carthage may never have been implemented thereby changing the outcome of Roman history far beyond the immediate need for defense.

Despite the outcome of Cannae, the Roman military potential remained profoundly impressive. It had taken the loss of nearly 100,000 Roman and allied troops since 218 to realize even the first defections from the confederacy. What Hannibal really needed were more battles like Cannae. Unfortunately for Hannibal, the Roman Senate made this possibility very unlikely. Cannae had served to vindicate the Fabian strategy and from 216 until 203 the Romans refrained from fighting pitched battles against Hannibal, exploiting to the fullest Rome's advantage of inexhaustible provisions and manpower by using delaying tactics.⁵⁴⁴

Changing of the Consuls Compared with the Change of Union Generals⁵⁴⁵

The issues of who was to command the legions and which from among the competing strategies would be employed to prosecute the war against Hannibal were matters that lay at the heart of the internal politics of Rome between 218 and 216. Although the Republic was organized so that its resources were harnessed to serve its

⁵⁴⁴ Rome's reaction to Hannibal, particularly Fabius' involvement, can be found most clearly and concisely in H.H. Scullard, A History of the Roman World 753 to 146 B.C., 4th Edition, pages 219-224. See J. Briscoe, "The Second Punic War", The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. VIII Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C., 2nd Edition, pages 67-70 for more on the changing of the Consuls.

⁵⁴⁵ See R.F. Vishnia, State, Society, and Popular Leaders in Mid-Republican Rome 241-167 B.C. (London, 1996), pages 49-114 for a thorough discussion of the selection of Magistrates and their effects on the Roman state.

defense, the nature of its constitution operated to prevent the emergence of a military professional. The command of the army lay not with professional soldiers, but with two annually appointed consuls who were not permitted early re-election. Although the *imperium*⁵⁴⁶ vested in the consulship carried with it supreme command of Rome's legions and responsibility for the prosecution of war,⁵⁴⁷ those elected to the office were rarely chosen for their military ability, but instead a candidate from a distinguished family. In consequence, the military experience of Roman generals, particularly those in command of large forces, was more limited compared to the professional expertise gained by Hannibal and his officers over many years of continuous service.

The election of Publius Cornelius Scipio and Tiberius Sempronius Longus as the elected consuls for 218 and the allocation by the Roman Senate of their areas of service – Spain and Africa – serve to vindicate Hannibal's belief that Rome intended to prosecute the war against Carthage by initiating an offensive strategy overseas.⁵⁴⁸ That they were tardy is derived from their conviction that the strategic initiative lay in their hands.

If Hannibal's first major victory at Trebia had been a matter of serious alarm for the Romans, the catastrophe at Lake Trasimene raised matters to the level of a national emergency. Within days further bad tidings arrived when news of an ambush of a Roman cavalry with all 4,000 killed or taken prisoner reached Rome.⁵⁴⁹ The Senate deemed the matter so dire they resorted to the ancient device of appointing a *dictator* to ensure the

⁵⁴⁶ Supreme executive authority, military, civil, and judicial, the most important power to command an army.

⁵⁴⁷ L. Keppie, The Making of the Roman Army From the Republic to Empire, page 102.

⁵⁴⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 3.40 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 374-377.

⁵⁴⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.86 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, pages 420-422.

most efficient coordination of the war effort. This office combined the *imperium* of two consuls, and the nominated individual would supersede all the other magistrates for a period of not more than six months. Rome appointed Quintus Fabius Maximus the post.⁵⁵⁰ According to Livy, there was an element of irregularity to the appointment because normally one of the consuls would nominate a suitable individual. But with Flaminius dead and Geminus unable to reach Rome, due to Hannibal's eastward march across the Apennines, they dispensed tradition and the *dictator* was elected by popular vote.⁵⁵¹ Hence, the appointment of Fabius was evidently ratified only by a popular election of the assembly, though surely on the advice of the Senate.

Not only had Fabius to contend with the opposition in his own camp, he also had detractors in Rome. His strategy was clearly anathema to powerful elements in the Roman Senate who still believed, notwithstanding the disasters at Trebia and Trasimene, that Hannibal could be defeated in an all out battle.⁵⁵² They connived to restrict Fabius' freedom of action by denying him the right to choose his own second in command; instead they foisted one of their own M. Minucius Rufus, the former consul, as *Magister Equitum* [Master of Horse], an officer who would prove to be of far more hot-headed temperament than Fabius.⁵⁵³

Although no military genius, Fabius' unique contribution to saving the Republic lay in his perception that the Romans were facing a prodigious military talent in Hannibal. He concluded that as long as they continued to accept battle they would

⁵⁵⁰ Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.87.6 & F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, page 422; See also, J.F. Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, pages 68-73.

⁵⁵¹ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 22.8.

⁵⁵² S. Lancel, *Hannibal*, page 97.

⁵⁵³ S. Lancel, *Hannibal*, page 98.

inevitably lose. He employed his dictatorial powers to initiate a new strategy predicated on the refusal to take risks or to fight pitched battles against the Carthaginian army. He would merely exhaust Hannibal by using delaying tactics. To a population grown weary of defeat and disenchanted with Fabius' strategy, his detractors advocated an offensive policy and as a reward, and no doubt as a deliberate attempt to impair Fabius in the exercise of his authority in the closing months of his dictatorship, Minucius was raised to equal that of Fabius. On his return to Apulia, Fabius suggested to Minucius that either they each took command of the whole army on alternate days or they split it, each taking command of one half. Minucius opted for the latter. However, when Hannibal destroyed half of Minucius' army at Geronium, a humbled and contrite Minucius agreed to the reunion of the army.⁵⁵⁴

In December 217 the six-month period of the dictatorship came to an end and command of the legions reverted to the two consuls for that year – M. Atilius Regulus elected to replace the dead Flaminius.⁵⁵⁵ Rome now became a hotbed of intrigue as factions within the Senate manoeuvred to ensure their candidates would be elected to the consulship for the following year. It is clear that as the war progressed the military strategy adopted by the Senate and exercised through the consuls was linked to whichever faction held influence at the time. In the face of the disenchantment with the Fabian strategy and the false optimism generated by Minucius support returned to an offensive strategy to defeat Hannibal.

In 216 the Roman Senate elected Gaius Terrentius Varro consul in the first round of votes.⁵⁵⁶ Varro's champion in his quest for the consulship, the tribune Q. Baebius

⁵⁵⁴ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.25.11.

⁵⁵⁵ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.31.7.

⁵⁵⁶ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.25.19.

Herennius, came from a family with long established links to the plebeian Metelli.⁵⁵⁷ Together with the group they constituted the most vocal and influential faction in the Senate in support of resuming the offensive against Hannibal.⁵⁵⁸ It is possible to discern a very determined attempt by this faction to prevent the reappointment of Fabius as consul at any cost. Their overwhelming conviction that Hannibal could only be defeated in the field explains their support of Varro who was undoubtedly fronting their cause. Their victory was further enhanced by the election of L. Aemilius Paullus as fellow consul. With Varro and Paullus in place, the Fabian strategy was promptly abandoned and, with the support of the majority in the Senate, the decision taken to resume the offensive against Hannibal with a view to forcing a decisive battle with him in 216.

Deliberate steps were taken to ensure that when Rome came to do battle in 216 it would have the initiative. The Roman Senate decreed the extension of the *imperium* to Servilius Geminus and M. Atilius Regulus as proconsuls under the direct authority of the two consuls along with the injunction they should not under any circumstances attempt to engage Hannibal in battle.⁵⁵⁹ Such a decision when it came would be at a time and on a ground of Rome's choosing – a situation unlike that of her two previous defeats. In a step the Romans had never taken before, the Senate moved to put eight legions in the field for the specific task of crushing the Carthaginian army by overwhelming force. In total Polybius claims the Romans levied eight legions of close to 90,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry.

⁵⁵⁷ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.43.3-11.

⁵⁵⁸ J. F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 74.

⁵⁵⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.106.2-5; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. I, page 435 and S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 103.

To validate my postulation that the policy of yearly collegial consuls hindered Rome until after Cannae we need only to observe the problems facing the Union command during the first few years of the war. Much of the problem faced by the Union forces lay with President Lincoln's unwillingness to entrust one competent general with ultimate control of the Union command. Even though the circumstances may be inexact, the outcome remains constant throughout the ages. Sun Tzu says it best in *The Art of War*, "...when there are no consistent rules to guide the officers and the men...the army is in disorder...When one treats people with benevolence, justice and righteousness, and reposes confidence in them, the army will be united in mind and all will be happy to server their leaders."⁵⁶⁰ Although the Union had no constitutional requirement to change leadership, by 1862 Lincoln relied on a military junta, consisting of himself, Edwin M. Stanton, General Henry Halleck, and retired General Ethan Allen Hitchcock. In consequence on many occasions Lincoln personally ruined the initiative of his generals, as revealed in the following examples.⁵⁶¹

Depressed by the Union defeat at Bull Run, Lincoln looked to George B. McClellan, a dashing young general, as the commander who would win the war. Of Lincoln's commanders, McClellan showed evidence of understanding the art of war. He built the Army of the Potomac into a well-organized and disciplined body – but it seemed he was forever organizing rather than using the well-oiled machine he had created. Although a brilliant administrator and organizer, McClellan lacked the initiative and resolve to be an effective military leader. After ordering the preparations, which McClellan had so long solicited, Lincoln relapsed into hesitancy and insisted that the general-in-chief submit his project to the examination of a council of war. Twelve

⁵⁶⁰ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. T. Cleary (Boston, MA, 1988) X.14; I.4.

⁵⁶¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN, 1957), page 30.

generals assembled not to receive the instructions of their chief, but to constitute a tribunal for passing judgment on plans.⁵⁶² This interference and his chronic hesitation caused McClellan to bungle the Peninsular Campaign greatly prolonging the war.

In March 1862 Lincoln had had enough. Rather than replacing McClellan he reorganized his command when he relieved McClellan as general in chief and rather than replacing him, created the War Board, composed of himself, Hitchcock, Stanton, and Halleck.⁵⁶³ He called on General John Pope, who had shown such leadership as Commander of the Army of the Mississippi, to take command of the new Army of Virginia (a consolidation of several forces). By July 1862 Lincoln unsatisfied with the war's progress again reorganized his command system calling on Henry Halleck to become general in chief of Union Armies. His decision reflected both the need for public support of a popular general and the failure of the War Board to supply sound strategic advice.⁵⁶⁴ Halleck had written a book about war and had an academic understanding of strategy and tactics, but the realities of combat showed this to be as much a liability as it was an asset. Additionally, though ambitious and full of bravado, Pope lacked people skills – in a word he was obnoxious. Because of Pope's terrible defeat at the Second Battle of Bull Run, Lincoln reinstated General George B. McClellan to command the Army of the Potomac. By the time McClellan finally moved in late October 1862, the president replaced him with Ambrose E. Burnside over Burnside's own self doubts.⁵⁶⁵

Burnside was well liked and brave, but he proved sorely deficient in strategic and tactical sense. He conducted his first campaign at Fredericksburg, disastrously bringing

⁵⁶² J.F.C. Fuller, Grant and Lee, page 30.

⁵⁶³ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 79.

⁵⁶⁴ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 81 & B. Catton, The Civil War, page 85.

⁵⁶⁵ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 102.

on December 13, 1862 the worst single defeat yet suffered by the U.S. Army. Lincoln then replaced Burnside with Joseph Hooker, a new general receptive to the ideas developed by Lincoln and Halleck. Although he did much to restore and improve the battered Army of the Potomac, he faced the prospect of battle against Robert E. Lee. Hooker was an able strategist and tactician, but Lee was abler. Even though he revitalized and rebuilt the Army of the Potomac and formulated an excellent plan of battle, at Chancellorsville, by his own admission, Hooker simply lost his nerve.⁵⁶⁶ When Hooker resigned on June 28, 1863, Lincoln and Halleck replaced the commander with General George Mead.⁵⁶⁷

Of all the men who commanded the Army of the Potomac, George Meade was probably the most satisfactory. Almost immediately after assuming command from Hooker, he led the army to victory at Gettysburg, the turning-point battle of the war. Yet he, too, fell short when he allowed Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia to limp away, causing Lincoln particular anguish.⁵⁶⁸

Only after three full years of war and numerous changes in command, Lincoln gave Grant his vote of confidence and on March 9, 1864, Grant received his commission as lieutenant general and supreme commander of all the Union armies. Not until he discovered Grant did Lincoln cease to interfere with the day-to-day running of the war. Although he remained deeply involved in initiating and executing Union strategy, in Grant he had a field commander who appealed to a public, which tended to see war as little more than battles.⁵⁶⁹ When the Younger Publius Cornelius Scipio [Africanus]

⁵⁶⁶ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 156 & B. Catton, The Civil War, pages 122, 127-128.

⁵⁶⁷ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 168.

⁵⁶⁸ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 169 & B. Catton, The Civil War, pages 140-141.

⁵⁶⁹ J.F.C. Fuller, Grant and Lee, page 30.

entered into the Roman political fray, he did so as the son of a soldier killed on the battlefield and as a participant in the first major clash with Hannibal in Italy. As one of the few survivors of Cannae he presented himself at the Forum for election where he won tremendous support from the people, tired of defeat, and yearning for an inspirational leader who would offer hope. It is only this continuity of leadership that created change in Rome's military proficiency.

From the beginning of the war, Grant grasped the common denominator at the root of the war: the South had fewer men, less money, and fewer resources than the North. The South could not afford to lose what it had while the North could afford to lose more because it had so much more. Grant came to command prepared with a strategy as simple as the equation that drove this war: destroy Robert E. Lee's Army and force the South into total submission through a "total war" against the civilian population.⁵⁷⁰

Chapter Conclusions

As discussed in this chapter Lee's victory at Chancellorsville led the South to have hopes for a peace settlement. As well, by Hannibal's victory at Cannae the Carthaginians began to have high hopes that Rome itself would capitulate. Polybius tells us, "The Romans on their part owing to this defeat at once abandoned all hope of retaining their supremacy in Italy, and were in the greatest fear about their own safety and that of Rome, expecting Hannibal every moment to appear."⁵⁷¹ Although Lee had no illusions about conquering the Union states, he hoped to demolish the Union's will to

⁵⁷⁰ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 230.

⁵⁷¹ Polybius, The Histories, 3.118.5.

“Ρωμαιοι γε μην την 'Ιταλιωτων δυναστειαν παραχρημα δια την ητταν απεγνωκεισαν, εν μεγαλοις δε φοβοις και κινδυνοις ησαν περι τε σφων αυτων και περι του της πατριδος εδαφους, οσον ουπω προσδοκωντες ηξειν αυτον τον 'Αννιβαν.”

continue the fight by invading the North.⁵⁷² Lee saw an offensive move at Gettysburg as his opportunity to crush the Army of the Potomac on Northern territory and thereby force the North to agree to a negotiated peace with an independent Confederate States of America. Hannibal, like Lee was a general of manoeuvre and position, getting his army bogged down in a prolonged siege of Rome cannot have been an attractive option. Some great generals win by a sudden stroke others win by thoroughness of preparation. All the indications are that Hannibal was a general of the latter type. None of his great victories were won by a single stroke, appearing suddenly before an unprepared enemy. Even at Lake Trasimene, where Hannibal achieved total surprise, he did so by drawing the Romans into a trap set in advance. Similar advance preparations were key to victory at Trebia, and in a different way at Cannae. Hannibal may have acted at the last moment in drawing his Spanish and Gallic troops forward into the “U”, but the overall disposition, with the Africans in columns at each side, was clearly planned in advance.

Hannibal had other war aims and another plan. After the prisoners were sorted out and the Italian allies sent home, he addressed the Roman captives, whose ransom he had set at a high price. Hannibal told the prisoners on making the ransom proposal that “He was waging, he said, no war of extermination with them, but was contending for honour and dominion.”⁵⁷³ This sounds very close to being a preliminary feeler for armistice terms. If the Romans accepted the release and repatriation of their prisoners in turn for ransom – a sort of tribute – the groundwork would be laid, and a certain momentum established, towards a negotiated settlement, the ultimate terms of which might include a further tribute, and surely would include Roman abandonment of the war effort and of

⁵⁷² B. Catton, The Civil War, pages 128-131 & A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, pages 157-158.

⁵⁷³ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 22.58.3. “... non internecivum sibi esse cum Romanis bellum; de dignitate atque imperio certare.” & J.F. Lazenby, “Was Maharbal Right?”, pages 22-58.

their alliance-system of control throughout Italy. In short, an agreement on return of prisoners would be the first step toward its hegemony [*imperium*]. Hannibal expected Rome to sue for peace. He wanted a victory recognized by a treaty that would be to Carthage's advantage and to reverse the humiliating situation that had arisen from the treaties of 241, the loss of Sicily and the obligation to pay a heavy indemnity, and 237, the loss of Sardinia and Corsica, plus the additional indemnity.⁵⁷⁴

In dealing with Rome the whole concept of war, as Hannibal knew it was incorrect. It was no longer enough to dramatically defeat the enemy in battle and then dictate a peace settlement based on the winner's terms. By Rome's refusal to yield even after resounding defeats, they introduced a new element to ancient warfare – total war. Rome had learned that a battle does not necessarily mean conquest. Hannibal arrived, according to Clausewitz's expression, at the culminating point of victory: if victory does not lead to the total defeat of the enemy and the restoration of peace, it forms a basis for counteraction and retribution. His own peace envoy had returned to his encampment only to relate how the *lictor* of the newly appointed *dictator* had relayed the same words to him that the Romans had given to Pyrrhus sixty years before – "...Pyrrhus must first depart out of Italy, and then, if he wished, the Romans would talk about friendship and alliance; but as long as he was there in arms, they would fight him with all their might..."⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷⁴ L. Keppie, The Making of the Roman Army From the Republic to the Empire, page 28 & S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 109.

⁵⁷⁵ Plutarch, Parallel Lives, *Pyrrhus*, 19.3-4.

"...Πυρρον εξελθοντα της 'Ιταλιας, ουτως, ει δεοιτο, περι φιλιας και συμμαχιας διαλεγεσθαι, μεχρι δε ου παρεστιν εν οπλοις, πολεμησην αυτω 'Ρωμαιοις κατα κρατος,..." Also, N. Machiavelli, The Art of War, page 201. "I their wars with Hannibal, the Romans honoured nothing so much as their

To Hannibal this meant a change in the tactical objectives to achieve his goal. He simply did not judge the time ripe for a direct move against Rome, but planned a series of new campaigns to break up the Roman Alliance System thereby forcing Rome into a peace agreement. In the wake of Cannae Hannibal exerted intense diplomatic activity in the south, taking advantage of the destabilizing effect of his victory. A march on Rome would not accomplish his objective. He must have been confident that the Roman system could be broken and that Rome was more vulnerable to political dismemberment than to direct military assault. In the next chapter we will investigate how his approach begins to change course.

unshaken firmness and constancy, for they never sued for peace nor showed the least signs of fear, even in the lowest ebb of their fortune.”

Chapter IV

By the end of 216 B.C. all of Carthage yearned for victory. The political hopes and aspirations for Carthage to once again rule the western Mediterranean guided Hannibal's decisions up to and including his resounding victory at Cannae and can best be expressed by the Clausewitzian doctrine, "war is a mere continuation of policy by other means."⁵⁷⁶ Like all nobility of the time, Hannibal had been taught in the Greek tradition of Hellenistic warfare wherein a crushing victory in the field would bring the enemy to accept his peace terms. In ancient times this meant the destruction of the enemy's military machine and could easily be envisaged, when professional armies, once destroyed, could not be immediately replaced. It is highly unlikely that Hannibal's Spartan tutor, Sisylos, would not have discussed the Persian Wars with his student. He surely had access to the details of Persia's capitulation after their defeat by the Athenians at the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C.; and yet again the terms for peace after the Greek victory over the Persians at Salamis and Plataea, which ended the second conflict in 479.⁵⁷⁷ As an admirer of Alexander's accomplishments Hannibal knew of the campaign in India where Alexander defeated the local ruler Poros at the river Hydaspes in 326 B.C. With the annihilation of the Indian army in this one decisive battle Alexander won all of the Punjab.⁵⁷⁸ As late as 217 B.C., Alexander's successors operated on a much greater scale, with the ability to concentrate 80,000 to 100,000 men at a single battle, as did both

⁵⁷⁶ C. von Clausewitz, On War, page 119.

⁵⁷⁷ J.F. Lazenby, The Defence of Greece, 490-479 B.C. (Warminster, 1993), pages 259-261.

⁵⁷⁸ Plutarch, Parallel Lives, Alexander, trans. B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1919).

Ptolemy IV and his Seleucid opponent Antiochus III at Raphia in 217 B.C., which resulted in Antiochus suing for peace.⁵⁷⁹

Rome did not fight on these terms. Mobilization became not only a mobilization of soldiers, but also of the entire labour force available to Rome. With the appearance of massive citizen armies, the task of destroying a military machine became more difficult because armies could continue to be replenished by mass conscription.⁵⁸⁰ In the three major battles of Trebia, Lake Trasimene, and Cannae, Rome had lost over ten percent of the entire population of citizens over seventeen years of age and during the first two years of war nearly one third of the Roman Senate had been killed in battle;⁵⁸¹ yet not only were the Romans unwilling to ransom their prisoners or extend terms for a peace settlement, they appointed M. Junius Pera dictator who ordered the mobilization of all young men from the age of seventeen, and because there were not enough free men, the state paid for and armed 8,000 slave recruits. The strain on the Roman economy was so great that soldiers and sailors went unpaid, loans were raised, and heavy taxes were levied to help finance the war.⁵⁸² Even with these burdens Rome proceeded to form an army of four legions and 1,000 cavalry, reinforced by contingents of allies and Latins.

Rome had every intention of continuing the war, and if anything were more determined than ever before; their soldiers and their city would end in triumph or be destroyed from the face of the earth. It was not just a matter of the advantages of a large population to draw from, but of sheer determination and will not to be defeated at any

⁵⁷⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 5.63.65.

⁵⁸⁰ C. von Clausewitz, On War, pages 61-62.

⁵⁸¹ A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, page 217.

⁵⁸² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, Vol. VII, trans. F.G. Moore, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), 26.36.

cost. With Rome a new form of war developed: total war. A war where "...any person, entity or location is selected for destruction, inactivation, or rendering non-usable... which will reduce or destroy the will or ability of the enemy to resist."⁵⁸³ Although Alexander waged something like total war against his opponents in the Far East, Rome on the other hand began a policy of total war that included harsh devastation against its own alliance system in order to inflict the most damage on Hannibal's ability to bring allies to the Carthaginian cause.

Hannibal had no choice but to continue his political efforts among Rome's allies. To ensure victory, not only the immediate but also the potential military capacity of the opponent had to be destroyed. The demands of the war led him to a series of brilliant marches and strategic manoeuvres, which carried him to the south of Italy. He counted on his greatest support coming from the former Greek cities in southern Italy: Lucania, Bruttium, and Campania where he could assert a policy that would make Carthage appear as the restorer of their former liberties while establishing Carthaginian protection over the entire region. At Capua he established a new base of operations and set about to form an alliance with Philip V of Macedon for external support, along with encouraging actions for the home government to take against Rome in Sicily and Sardinia. Since it is unnecessary for my argument to describe every battle, march, and manoeuvre that took place during the long campaign, I shall therefore outline the broad pattern of events, highlighting those that are especially significant. A pattern does emerge when all of Hannibal's activities during this time are analyzed. Hannibal was attacking the Romans when they presented him with the opportunity. But more often than this, he was defending the Italian cities which came over to his side. Occasionally both of these

⁵⁸³ C. von Clausewitz, On War, pages 62-63.

objectives could be combined in a counter-offensive. The final activity during the years 215 and 203 was that of bringing more cities over to his side.

Possible Strategies

On the evening following the Battle of Cannae, Maharbal, the Carthaginian master of cavalry, believed Rome to be within Hannibal's reach. No aspect of the war has prompted more subsequent debate than Hannibal's rejection of Maharbal's advice. But from Livy's time on, the general consensus through the centuries – no doubt shaped by Livy's own epitome – has been that Maharbal was correct, or at least that Livy was correct in his judgment of events, if not by our standards of historiographical precision, then he put those words in Maharbal's mouth. Field Marshall Montgomery put it unequivocally: "Maharbal," he said, "was right."⁵⁸⁴ However, recent writers have tended toward certain revisionism with respect to this traditional critique of Hannibal.⁵⁸⁵

Obviously, Hannibal knew he needed an end game for a commander cannot win a war with only an opening gambit. To date he had won three resounding victories. Yet as Livy tells the story, after the Battle of Cannae, Maharbal thought not a moment should be lost and declared that Hannibal could be dining in Rome within five days. He further

⁵⁸⁴ Vis. Montgomery of Alamein, A History of Warfare (London, 1968), page 98 and E. Bradford, Hannibal, pages 120-121.

⁵⁸⁵ J.F. Lazenby, "Was Maharbal Right?", pages 39-48. Most, though still hold to the notion that Hannibal did not attack Rome because he lacked a siege train, such as B. Alexander, How Great Generals Win (New York, 1993), page 48 and B.H. Liddell Hart, Strategy, Second Revised Edition (London, 1967), page 29. N. Machiavelli, The Art of War, page 120, makes a similar point by stating, "I say, then, that when you have won a victory, you ought by all means to pursue it, and to imitate Julius Caesar rather than Hannibal in this respect; the latter lost the empire of Rome by trifling away his time at Capua, after he had routed the Romans at the battle of Cannae." Though he does not say *how* Hannibal could have accomplished such a feat.

equivocated, “you know how to gain a victory, Hannibal; you know not how to use one.”⁵⁸⁶ Had Hannibal marched on Rome as Maharbal suggested, would the outcome have been different?

Immediately following Cannae three factors come together to support a lightning attack on the city of Rome. With the vast majority of the Roman army either dead or captured the Romans were reduced to relying on a minimum army to defend the city. Next the overwhelming destruction and catastrophic loss of life created an atmosphere of fear within the common man’s psyche that could have been exploited with little effort. Believing their own lives and the existence of their city to be in imminent danger chaos and panic swept the entire city. Even if the Romans did not capitulate immediately upon Hannibal’s arrival, with the allies he now had in the South, he could have had a siege train built while supplies arrived for a prolonged encampment.

Yet even considering these pros for the attack, in the narrowest sense, what Maharbal called for was impossible. Cannae was some three hundred miles from Rome, and neither Hannibal’s army nor any other could march that distance in five days. Maharbal’s cavalry might conceivably cover the ground in that time, but cavalry was the force least suited to an attack on a fortified city. Unless the cavalry arrived with such total surprise that they burst through the city gates before they could be closed, they could do nothing against the walls of Rome. Some fifteen centuries previously, Hittite chariotry had achieved just such a total surprise against Babylon, but Hannibal most likely did not know of that, and would have had no reason to consider it a serious option if he did; conditions were too different. Rome was certainly on some sort of war footing, with a strong guard at the gates, which would certainly be closed at first sight of the dust cloud raised by a large force of approaching cavalry.

⁵⁸⁶ Livy, *Ad Urbe Condita*, 22.51.5-6. For text, see Chapter 1, Note 1.

Even if we ignore the narrow element of timing, the problems of making a sudden descent on Rome would be difficult in the extreme, and the outcome highly uncertain. The army might cover the ground in ten or fifteen days at a forced march, with the cavalry going ahead (as Maharbal suggested) to cut off the city, and perhaps lay waste to the areas immediately outside the walls, as a morale-destroying measure to signal to those within the enormity of their army's disaster and the imminence of worse to come.

Hannibal's army, however, must have been scarcely in any condition to undertake a long forced march. The troops had just won a very hard-fought battle against an enemy who heavily outnumbered them. The number of wounded, though unreported, must have been very large; especially among the Spanish and Gallic troops who had borne the brunt of the Roman advance in the earlier stages of the infantry action. To the seriously wounded who could not march at all must be added a large number of walking wounded. Many would have been only lightly wounded, and would be ready for renewed action in a couple of days, but some rest would be needed for them to recover their strength. Overexertion at this point might well hamper their recovery, rendering them less battle-worthy than otherwise and slowing the army's march.

Moreover, on the evening of the battle, the victory itself was not yet complete. Some fifteen thousand Romans remained in the two Roman camps, and about ten thousand more scattered through the countryside nearby. If Hannibal marched immediately for Rome, his more severely wounded men would have been at risk from a Roman counterattack. Poor as Roman morale was at that point, such an action could not be ruled out, especially as most of the surviving Romans had not been directly in the action, and they might not be fully aware of the magnitude of the defeat.

In addition to all these considerations, there was the question of just what Hannibal could do at Rome once he got there. At the beginning of the war, Saguntum – a

very much weaker target – had withstood an eight-month siege before it finally fell. For Hannibal, a general of manoeuvre and position, getting his army bogged down in a prolonged siege of Rome cannot have been an attractive option. Certainly, it would be less attractive to him than the alternative of pressing forward with his political strategy of attempting to break up the Roman alliance system in Italy; though the latter had not been successful so far, its chances might improve (as in fact they did) in the wake of the total defeat he had inflicted on the Roman field army.⁵⁸⁷

There did remain the option of marching on Rome with the intent of taking it by storm rather than by prolonged siege. Such an operation was possible; Scipio the Younger would achieve just that in Spain a few years later when he took Carthago Nova. Lightning descent on Rome would preclude use of the more sophisticated methods of storming a city, such as siege towers, since these could only be fabricated by extensive preparation in place. Ordinary scaling-ladders, however, could be quickly made and brought into action. Though scarcely a sophisticated method of assault, and a very hazardous one for the attackers, the prospects of a sudden assault were best against defenders who had little time to organize their defensive measures, who had little experience at such operations, and who were certain to be demoralized.

Even so, an assault by storm was a high-risk option, and one that would leave Hannibal very much worse off if it failed. The failure of an initial assault would itself raise the morale of the Roman defenders, and give them a chance to shore up weak spots in the defense, both geographical and organisational. Each follow-up assault would be carried out under progressively less favourable conditions. If the city did not fall nearly at

⁵⁸⁷ A further indication of not having a siege in mind, particularly of Rome, is the lack of any evidence of Hannibal requesting aid from Syracuse, Carthage's new ally, in the form of Archimedes, the greatest engineer of his time and for many centuries to come.

once, Hannibal would be left with very disagreeable options: either to settle in for a prolonged siege, or to march away, further restoring Roman morale, and strength among other Italians, by allowing them to claim a victory in the successful defense of their city.

Thus, the problems of both marching on Rome and of attacking it posed powerful arguments against Maharbal's suggestion of immediate attack on Rome. Yet, all of this said, rejecting these arguments of caution and making a bold descent on Rome was by no means out of the question. Had Hannibal assembled his troops immediately after the close of action at Cannae and told them to be prepared to march on Rome at dawn, many of the problems outlined above would have vanished in a stroke. As for the lightly wounded, or simply exhausted, psychology would take a hand; even men who are bone-weary, limping, and bandaged, find themselves able to undertake a forced march when they have just won one great victory and the prospect of the ultimate victory is immediately before them. Once at Rome, the same psychology could well impel the men into the sort of furious, at-all-costs assault that would unnerve the defense, then shatter it.

Additionally Hannibal's decision against a direct attack on Rome had nothing to do with his lack of a siege train – there is plenty of evidence that he could construct all he needed to take a fortified city. Livy mentions mantletts [*vineae*] used in the attack on Casilinum in 216,⁵⁸⁸ *machinations* in the attack on the citadel of Tarentum in 213 – 212,⁵⁸⁹ and he specifically adds that although the Carthaginians did not bring siege equipment with them in 205, during the attack on Locri they made everything they needed on site.⁵⁹⁰ Hannibal knew even with siege equipment sieges were a protracted operations, which would curtail his ability to manoeuvre freely. His successes against

⁵⁸⁸ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.18.8.

⁵⁸⁹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 25.11.10.

⁵⁹⁰ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 29.7.4.

Rome, coupled with his ability to march at will were more likely to impress the allies than the assault or capture of a few towns. Neither did a siege bring about a friendly or reliable ally.⁵⁹¹

Livy fills his account for the phase of the war after Cannae with Hannibal setting siege to various cities, most of which were unsuccessful. How many of these were true sieges, as opposed to temporary military demonstrations on Hannibal's part is perhaps open to question. While it is true that most of the cities, which defected to Hannibal, did so only with the threat of his army. Twice in 216 he hoped to force Neapolis into submission; however, his army withdrew when it became obvious the city could not be breached and he went on to starve Nuceria into submission and make further unsuccessful threats on Nola. Hannibal usually subjected only the smaller cities to direct attack, for an assault on a well-fortified city risked heavy casualties and damage to his reputation. The principal means for the Carthaginians to take a city were by stealth or blockade, rather than a full-fledged siege. The use of stealth required an offer of betrayal from inside the city; a blockade required the army to stay in place possibly for months. For Hannibal to use his main army in this manner usually signaled the importance to him of the city.⁵⁹² For example, if he could not obtain Neapolis, then Cumae would suffice as his much-needed seaport. Did Hannibal's poor success with nearly all of his sieges indicate he had neither the patience, nor the manpower and logistics necessary for a prolonged siege or was there another reason all together?

⁵⁹¹ For more on the art of sieges during the 2nd Punic War and the years leading up to it, see P.B. Kern, Ancient Siege Warfare (London, 1999), pages 251-285. A good account of Hannibal's false move on Rome can be found in E. Bradford, Hannibal, 153-161.

⁵⁹² Attempts at Neapolis, Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.1.5-10, 14.5, 15.1-6; and on Nola, Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.15.7-17.1.

Certainly, he had good reason not to become encumbered in a siege unless the prospects were very good, as with Petelia, or the objective particularly important, as with Casilinum. Every time Hannibal approached a Roman-held city only to march away again, it affected a moral victory for the Romans. Certainly for the inhabitants and garrisons of these cities, it must have been an intimidating experience to have Hannibal's invincible army march up to their walls, and a correspondingly emboldening and exhilarating sensation to see them march away again after a skirmish or two. By the end of 216, although Rome's situation was grave, it was clear that Roman troops could hold a fortified city against Hannibal, and even sometimes do well in a skirmish, even if they dared not meet him in a pitched battle.

Although evidence is scanty, which makes it difficult to generalize about Hannibal's tactics and stance on sieges, it is possible that the most obvious reason for his not pursuing a strategy of protracted sieges is that besieging a city hardly endeared the people to the Carthaginian cause and would appear diametrically opposed to the premise that he was merely the liberator of Italy from the clutches of Rome.⁵⁹³ Livy singles out that by Hannibal's order the Locrians were extended peace terms with Carthage and allowed to live by their own laws, with the harbour remaining under Locrian control.⁵⁹⁴ Another example shows Hannibal's attempt to keep Carthage from seeming the oppressor by keeping the wealthy city of Croton from being sacked by the Bruttians.⁵⁹⁵ The Hellenistic world used the common slogan "freedom of the Greeks" to justify military manoeuvrings and policies by claiming to be liberating the Greeks from foreign domination. But for the most part Hannibal's rhetoric may not be as much a sign that he

⁵⁹³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 22.58.3.

⁵⁹⁴ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.1.1, 13.

⁵⁹⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.1.1-8.

regarded the Italians as oppressed by Rome so much as he was appealing to them in the same diplomatic conventions used in the Greek world.⁵⁹⁶ Once Hannibal won over a city, he then had to be able to demonstrate that he could defend it. The local people who supported Hannibal would have much to fear if they thought there was a real possibility of Rome retaking the city and punishing them. It is clear from what information remains of Hannibal's manoeuvres after Cannae that his decisions were based on presenting himself as their liberator, rather than oppressor, and then keeping the Roman forces away from those states he has won over.

Hannibal's March on Rome Compared to Jubal Early's March on Washington

When Hannibal finally marched on Rome in 211 B.C., the consequences proved similar to the attack by the Confederate general Jubal Early on the Northern capital. In June and July 1864 General Early led an astoundingly daring attack on Washington, D.C., that proved psychologically disastrous for the Union. Early met little resistance in his march toward Washington, crushing a tiny federal force near the Monocacy River in July. Riding up from the Shenandoah Valley his corps of 14,000 men seized and destroyed property throughout Maryland, collecting more than \$200,000 in ransom by threatening to burn the towns of Hagerstown and Frederick. Within two days, he stood less than five miles from the nation's capital; however, federal reinforcements arrived in time to prevent Early from capturing the city. When Hannibal executed a similar manoeuvre he gambled: if he threatened the capital, the consular armies would be forced to march to the aid of the city, thereby relieving Capua. As Hannibal marched toward Rome he devastated the farmlands of Fregellae, and destroyed the bridges. Upon encamping eight miles from Rome in the region called Pupinia, the Numidian horsemen caught and killed

⁵⁹⁶ K. Lomas, Roman Italy, 338 B.C. – AD200, page 15.

any fugitives in their path.⁵⁹⁷ Every able-bodied male hastened to man the walls and the citadel of Rome while the Senate met in order to direct the two newly formed legions in their defense of the city. Hannibal could not hope to break the enormous towers of Rome – all he could do was to ravage the countryside around the city, carrying off the crops and cattle while the Romans watched helplessly.

As Hannibal planned, Rome detached Fulvius from the armies besieging Capua and with a small force he marched back to Rome. Careful to avoid Hannibal, Fulvius entered the city; however, Hannibal crossed the Anio and drew up his forces for battle.⁵⁹⁸ With the full agreement of the Senate, Fulvius assembled his army outside the walls of the city to meet Hannibal. However, according to Livy,

“...a great downpour mingled with hail so confused both battle-lines that, holding on to their arms with difficulty, they returned to camp, fearing everything more than the enemy. And the following day, when the lines were drawn up on the same spot, the same bad weather parted them. On both days, when they had retired to their camps, to their astonishment there came a clear sky with a calm. For the Carthaginians it became a solemn warning...”⁵⁹⁹

Hannibal’s move is particularly significant because he planned only to threaten, not to stage a full-scale attack. He marched on Rome for the strategic purpose of drawing the Roman army away from his most important ally in Italy.⁶⁰⁰ He had no intention of

⁵⁹⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 26.10.

⁵⁹⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 26.10.

⁵⁹⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 26.11.2-4. “...imber ingens grandine mixtus ita utramque aciem turbavit ut vix armis retentis in castra sese receperint, nullius rei minore quam hostium metu. Et postero die eodem loco acies instructas eadem tempestas diremit; ubi recepissent se in castra, mira serenitas cum tranquillitate oriebatur. In religionem ea res apud Poenos versa est...”

⁶⁰⁰ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal’s War, page 86.

attempting major confrontation with Rome on this occasion, but appeared before its walls only to draw away the besiegers of Capua. The destruction of Rome formed no part of Hannibal's plans.⁶⁰¹ He made no attempt to besiege the city or to storm it. The psychological effect on the citizens of Rome is still felt in the phrase, "Hannibal is at the gates".

Hannibal's Second Strategy⁶⁰²

The Romans, in spite of the defeats they had suffered at Trebia, Lake Trasimene, and Cannae did not sue for peace. Accordingly historians have made the assumption that neither Carthage, nor Hannibal had alternate plans for ending the war. Can our sources give us any indication this is not the case? It is without doubt unclear that Hannibal thought of "strategy" in terms of one continuous approach. Rather than accept the outward assumptions of those who were writing chronicles to the greatness of Rome, there may be reasons – constraints of genre, for example – that have prevented other historians from revealing a less traditional approach to this question. As I shall argue by examining the evidence from a Carthaginian perspective we are offered the opportunity to introduce a new interpretation of his plans and the object of the study becomes an analysis of the ancient sources to present a new understanding of Hannibal's brilliance.

⁶⁰¹ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 86.

⁶⁰² This is a new way of viewing the events Hannibal was involved in and the actions he took in the aftermath of Cannae. Those sources which were used the most are: E. Bradford, Hannibal, pages 120-125; H. Delbrück, Warfare in Antiquity, pages 338-340; T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 381-529. Such thinking is not unique to Hannibal. Napoleon is another general who apparently lacked or changed his strategy. "Such empirical evidence suggests that Napoleon's ambition was not driven by any over-arching 'master-plan' or 'grand design', present from the start and systematically worked out, but that it grew by an *evolving* process or pragmatic opportunism, which eventually over-reached itself." G. Ellis, Napoleon, Profiles in Power (Harlow, 1997), pages 6-7.

As mentioned earlier the mark of a great general is his willingness to change his strategy to accommodate the situation. Sun Tzu articulated, “The general must rely on his ability to control the situation to his advantage as opportunity dictates.”⁶⁰³ And although Hannibal’s first strategy was not ill conceived it did not successfully bring the war to an end. For that reason, it is my assumption Hannibal changed his strategy at least three times to accomplish not the destruction of Rome, but to remove the limitations imposed on Carthage after the First War for “honour and power”.⁶⁰⁴

For Robert E. Lee the best time to offer to negotiate is when done from a position of strength and for Hannibal the time could not have been better. Let us examine the circumstance Lee considered to be his strong point. With two recent victories, Virginia virtually free of Union troops, and his army marching into Maryland, Lee proposed to President Davis the time was ripe for the Confederacy to offer peace negotiations. Lee felt, “such a proposition coming from us at this time, could in no way be regarded as suing for peace; but, being made when it is in our power to inflict injury upon our adversary, would show conclusively to the world that our sole object is the establishment of our independence...”⁶⁰⁵ The Union showed no interest in peace. For Hannibal the timing could not have been better for peace negotiations than after Cannae when he allowed ten Romans to leave for their city with Carthalo. Yet as we have discovered with Lee whatever his expectations, he must have been sorely disappointed. While Hannibal had hoped by his magnanimity Rome would press for peace instead the Roman Senate decided they would show no weakness. It was up to Hannibal to draw up a new plan for bringing the war to a close.

⁶⁰³ Sun Tzu, The Art of War, VII.10.9.

⁶⁰⁴ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 22.58.3.

⁶⁰⁵ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 227.

When the Boii ambushed and killed the praetor and consul-elect L. Postumius Albinus in 215/4 along with two legions in Cisalpine Gaul,⁶⁰⁶ Hannibal must have taken this as an opportunity to escalate the war and therefore changed his strategy. His own aim was to seize Sardinia, Corsica and Sicily, while he gained control of Southern Italy. He determined that even a small Carthaginian force might have the opportunity to not only take control of Sardinia and Corsica, and yet again raise all Gaul into active hostility. This condition would be of vast assistance to the Carthaginian effort and may induce additional allies to join against Rome. Such a situation could prove brilliantly favourable for Hannibal.⁶⁰⁷ When this was accomplished he thought the war would be over.

Consequently he decided to hold on in Italy for an indefinite time. If he could press Carthage to not only continue support for his actions in Italy and Hasdrubal's dealings in Spain, but to support uprisings on the islands of Sicily and Sardinia, he could convince Philip of Macedon to add naval support to the Carthaginian cause. As Syracuse opened to Carthage, the Macedonians held the Roman fleet in check at Brundisium. If Philip could be persuaded to descend in force on the Italian coast, it might turn the scales against Rome. No other time could have been better than immediately after Cannae when Hannibal was at the height of his repute. Meanwhile he would wait for the opportunity to strike another major blow against Rome such as at Cannae. Hannibal's status as General afforded him with a great deal of influence over the Carthaginian senate, for it was the political leaders in Carthage, not Hannibal who fashioned many of the major decisions of the war. If the war spread, Rome would be forced to disperse their focus from Hannibal to a variety of other areas, thereby scattering the troop strength concentrated in Italy.

⁶⁰⁶ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.24.11-12 & J.F. Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, pages 94-95.

⁶⁰⁷ T.A. Dodge, *Hannibal*, page 403.

Hannibal's actions forced Rome into a defensive mode in Italy with the following objectives: to hold the Pyrenees forestalling any reinforcements from reaching Hannibal; to head off the Macedonian army and prevent its reaching Italy; to keep up communications with Sicily and Sardinia; and to step up actions in Spain. In 214 the Roman Senate decided to carry on operations with eighteen legions, not including allied contingents. Two legions each were assigned to Cisalpine Gaul, Sardinia, and Sicily. After subtracting these legions, no fewer than twelve legions remained on hand in Italy. Assuming the usual equal allied contingent, the Romans intended to mobilize 100,000 men, a force approximately five times the size of Hannibal's army – a serious development. Moreover, the fleet numbers amounted to 150 vessels, not including forces engaged in Spain.⁶⁰⁸ That is about double the number of Roman citizens available at Cannae. And Spain became Rome's key to success as will be discussed later in this chapter. In order to face expenses for the war the Senate doubled the rate of tax, causing continued problems in Sicily and Sardinia.⁶⁰⁹

A Sardinian delegation succeeded in persuading the Carthaginian government the island was willing and ready to revolt. Accordingly, the senate jumped at the opportunity for a Carthaginian victory in Sardinia would have been a strategic move: the Romans would have been out an army, and would have had to either send another – reducing their strength in Italy – or abandon Sardinia to Carthage. If Rome abandoned Sardinia, not only would it be a psychological and political gain for Carthage, but also would secure a much-needed base for naval operations. As previously noted, oared warships were highly dependent on bases; Sardinia provided a suitable site for operations against Italy,

⁶⁰⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.11.2-5.

⁶⁰⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.13.1.

particularly nearby Latium, for interdiction of Roman communications with their forces in Spain. Spain held a key threat to the safety of the homeland of Carthage.

With the retirement of Aulus Cornelius, as well as the Sardinians' increased restiveness due to increased taxes and requisitions of grain by Rome pressed the Carthaginians to send an expeditionary force to Sardinia. Carthage dispatched a fleet under the command of Hasdrubal the Bald, but it was forced to the Balearic Islands by bad weather.⁶¹⁰ Due to the delay, Rome had enough time to reinforce their troops with a second legion of 22,000 infantry and 1,200 cavalry under the command of Manlius Torquatus.⁶¹¹ Manlius swiftly defeated Hasdrubal the Bald upon his belated arrival and the rebellion collapsed.⁶¹² In two battles Manlius utterly overthrew the Carthaginians. With 5,000 men killed and captured, Rome again subjugated the island. Although the disastrous actions in Sardinia did not re-secure the island for Carthage, Octacilius' absence from his base at Lilybaeum enabled a Carthaginian fleet commanded by Bomilcar to slip safely through to Locri in southern Italy with troops, elephants, and supplies for Hannibal's army.⁶¹³ Although Bomilcar reached Italy, he did not bring the number of forces Mago had raised.⁶¹⁴

In a letter addressed to the Carthaginian senate, Hannibal convincingly pushed for Carthage to re-conquer the island of Sicily. If the Carthaginians were to re-establish themselves in Sicily, its ports would allow them to support his army in Italy far more closely. The death of Hiero of Syracuse set in motion a series of events that might have

⁶¹⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.32.8-12; 34.16-17 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 97.

⁶¹¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.34.10-15.

⁶¹² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.40-41.7.

⁶¹³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.41.10 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 98.

⁶¹⁴ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.32.11.

worked greatly to Carthage's advantage. Hiero had been a reliable ally of Rome; the Roman connection helped preserve general peace in Sicily, as well as his own hold on power. With his death, Sicilian Greek politics briefly resumed its traditional turbulence and after a short treaty with Rome, Syracuse again allied with Carthage and declared war on Rome.⁶¹⁵ Many cities in Sicily followed by declaring war on Rome and with these defections the problem of manning the Roman fleet worsened for it was from these towns in Sicily that the *socii navales* were drawn.⁶¹⁶ This situation combined with Marcellus' ill-timed ruthlessness at Henna and Carthaginian ambitions to restore their position in Sicily, created a new front in the war.

As with the Carthaginian attempt to support an uprising in Sardinia in 215, this larger show of support for the anti-Roman rebellion in Sicily appears to have been guided by politics as well as strategic considerations. Livy indicates Rome used Sicily repeatedly as a way station for the Roman navy's war and attack on Africa.⁶¹⁷ While the best use of the 28,000 troops sent to Sicily may have been in Italy under Hannibal's leadership, the return of Sicily to Carthaginian control would provide a strategic and logistical base from which operations in Italy could be supported far more effectively than directly from Carthage, or from any alternative staging base such as Sardinia or Spain. As the war exploded in Sicily, Hannibal never failed to realize how important to his cause could be a Carthaginian triumph in Sicily.

Precisely because of its strategic value, the Romans could hardly abandon Sicily without a major struggle, stretching their resources both in manpower and financially. Even if the Carthaginians could secure only part of the island, that portion would still

⁶¹⁵ T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, page 442.

⁶¹⁶ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 170.

⁶¹⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 29.35.3-5.

serve as a staging base, opening an opportunity previously lacking for some sort of coordinated action. In short, from Hannibal's point of view, a Carthaginian campaign in Sicily was a sound strategic initiative.

In fact the struggle for Syracuse was crucial and much more important to Hannibal's success than Capua.⁶¹⁸ The main event in Sicily had been Hieronymus' declaration for the Carthaginians – only to be almost immediately murdered by the pro-Roman party. This in its turn provoked the Syracusans who favoured Carthage to kill and/or expel the rich merchants and others who favoured Rome. The popular party in its hatred of those who had grown wealthy through their Roman connections favoured Hannibal. The poor and dispossessed saw him as the leader who would free them from the heavy hand of Rome, but also as the leader who would not be concerned as to how they governed their cities. It is interesting to see this despotic warlord welcomed by the plebians.

By persisting in the prolonged siege of Syracuse the Romans were kept in a firm grip for nearly two years by commitments in Sicily. Marcellus commenced operations against Syracuse in 213 with an all-out assault by land and sea.⁶¹⁹ Archimedes ingenious machines designed to hurl stones and other missiles to various ranges, caused severe casualties as the Roman ships approached. He also designed beams intended to swing over the walls and drop lumps of lead onto the *sambucæ*, which seized the prows of the ships lifting them into the air.⁶²⁰ Archimedes' efforts forced the Romans to set siege to the

⁶¹⁸ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 115.

⁶¹⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 8.3.2; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 70 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 106-107.

⁶²⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 8.4-6.6 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, pages 71-77.

city to force its capitulation through starvation rather than by direct assault. The only hope for the Syracusans lay in the Carthaginian fleet, which could get supplies into the beleaguered city.⁶²¹

Unfortunately for Syracuse, this did not happen. The Carthaginian navy made a genuine effort although Rome's fleet was twice the size of Carthage's, with 100 Roman warships operating near Sicily.⁶²² Bomilcar was back in 212 B.C. with 90 ships leaving 55 to help the Syracusans.⁶²³ After an outbreak of disease in Syracuse, Bomilcar returned to Carthage with 130 warships, escorting 700 merchant vessels loaded with supplies.⁶²⁴ If Bomilcar won Syracuse would receive these much-needed supplies and if his victory was decisive, he could, perhaps, recover Sicily for Carthage. But when he saw the Roman fleet bearing down on him, "Bomilcar, alarmed by something unforeseen, made sail for open water, and after sending messengers to Heraclea to command the transports to return thence to Africa, he himself sailed along the coast of Sicily and made for Tarentum."⁶²⁵ Epicydes, seeing the Carthaginians sail away, gave up hope and when the news reached the Sicilian troops gathering near Syracuse, they submitted to Rome.⁶²⁶

Appius Claudius remained in command of the city's blockade with two-thirds of the Roman forces while Marcellus took the remaining troops to try to recover the other

⁶²¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.36.3.

⁶²² Polybius, The Histories, 8.15; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, pages 93-94 & Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.27.5.

⁶²³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 25.25.11.

⁶²⁴ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 25.27.2-4.

⁶²⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 25.27.12. "...Bomilcar vela in altum dedit missisque nuntiis Heracleam qui onerarias retro inde Africam repetere iuberent, ipse Siciliam praetervectus Tarentum petit." & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 118.

⁶²⁶ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 25.31.9-10. See also, G.P. Baker, Hannibal, pages 173-195.

towns in Sicily, which had gone over to Carthage.⁶²⁷ Syracuse fell towards the end of 212 and although some Carthaginian forces remained in Sicily, they were of no consequence.⁶²⁸

In 209 Rome dispatched thirty ships from Sicily to support Fabius in Tarentum and Laevinus retained seventy ships to protect the island due to rumours of Carthaginian naval preparations against Sicily.⁶²⁹ Further speculations caused the Roman Senate to increase the number of warships commissioned in 208 B.C. to 281, restoring the Sicilian fleet to 100 warships commanded by Laevinus off Clupea in the largest naval battle of the 2nd Roman War.⁶³⁰ The Romans captured eighteen ships, leaving Laevinus to raid Utica and Carthage on his way back to Sicily. On the return trip he encountered seventy Carthaginian ships, capturing seventeen and sinking four.⁶³¹ Livy asserts, “from then on the sea became safe, enemy ships having been driven off it, and great supplies of corn were brought to Rome.”⁶³² However, these successes led to Rome’s complacency and they reduced their naval contingent at Sicily to thirty ships in 206,⁶³³ resulting in reinforcement reaching Mago.⁶³⁴ Although success in Sicily might not have brought victory, it would have further enforced a sense of confidence amongst the Roman allies if

⁶²⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 8.7.12 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 78.

⁶²⁸ For a good summary of the events concerning Sicily see E. Bradford, Hannibal, pages 147-152.

⁶²⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.7.15-16; 8.17.

⁶³⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.22.9.

⁶³¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.29.7-8.

⁶³² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.4.7. “Tuto inde mari pulsis hostium navibus magni conmeatus frumenti Romam subvecti.”

⁶³³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.10.16.

⁶³⁴ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal’s War, page 197.

the lines of influence could be brought back to that of before 270 B.C. and Rome's conquest of southern Italy.⁶³⁵

Hannibal Divides His Army

Following the Roman catastrophe at Cannae, Hannibal's attempt to pick up where Pyrrhus had left off, now appeared to be coming to fruition. He admired Pyrrhus and knew of his campaigns against the Romans in southern Italy sixty years previously. According to Livy, Pyrrhus, Hannibal stated, was so well versed in the art of winning over people that the Italian states would rather be governed by him, a foreign king, than by the Romans, even though they had long been under Roman control.⁶³⁶ Hannibal based his assumptions on his knowledge that Pyrrhus was not only invited by the Tarentines to command the war against Rome, but on behalf of many of the Italian states: the Lucanians, the Samnites, the Etruscans, the Messapii, and possibly the Bruttians joined in the appeal to Pyrrhus for help against Rome. They went so far as to assure Pyrrhus that his arrival would spark off a general uprising among the Italian cities. Plutarch specifically states the Tarentines guaranteed that Pyrrhus would have at his disposition an allied army of 350,000 infantry, and 20,000 cavalry "...gathered from Lucania, Messapia, Samnium, and Tarentum..."⁶³⁷

It appears on this first invitation Pyrrhus rejected the request from Tarentum and only relented when they begged him to hurry to their rescue. Hannibal reasoned he would receive no less a warm reception from the Tarentines; however, he must have been aware Pyrrhus had been surprised and deeply disappointed upon his arrival to find the

⁶³⁵ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 115.

⁶³⁶ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 35.14.9 & S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 110-111.

⁶³⁷ Plutarch, Parallel Lives, *Pyrrhus*, 13.6.

"...υπαρξουσιν μεγαλαι παρα τε Λευκανων και Μεσσαιπων και Σαυνιτων και Ταραντινων..."

Tarentines had made no serious arrangements at all. Not only was the army of 350,000 men non-existent, there had been no concerted effort to co-ordinate the efforts of the enemies of Rome.

Not content to rely on the dependability of internal support, Hannibal for the first time makes a decision to divide his army. After first establishing a base at Compsa, he entrusted a portion of his army to his brother Mago, with the mission to go south and to bring the Greek cities along the coast into submission through whatever means necessary, “...and ordered Mago either to take over such cities of that region as were deserting the Romans or to compel them to desert in case they refused.”⁶³⁸ While Mago began his march through southern Italy Hannibal led the main force of his army through Campania to Neapolis in hopes of obtaining a seaport, and thereby opening communications with Carthage.

Although the control of the Italian states by Pyrrhus had been short lived, Hannibal – unlike Pyrrhus – was not acting for his own personal gain and could therefore hope to be better received politically. His invitation into the land of the Hirpini resulted in Compsa being immediately turned over to him without resistance,⁶³⁹ and he subsequently received alliances with the regions of Lucania and Bruttium, and much of Samnium and Apulia.

“After the battle of Cannae and the capture and plunder of the camps, Hannibal had moved at once out of Apulia into Samnium, being invited into the land of the Hirpini by Statius Trebius, who promised that he would turn over Compsa to him...After the news of the battle of Cannae, and when the coming of Hannibal

⁶³⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.1.4. “exercitu partito Magonem regionis eius urbes aut deficientis ab Romanis accipere aut detractantis cogere ad defectionem iubet,...”

⁶³⁹ Livy, Ad Urbe Condita, 23.1.3.

had been made known by utterances of Trebius, since the Mopsii had left the city, it was handed over to the Carthaginians without resistance and a garrison admitted.⁶⁴⁰

The indication that Hannibal moved into Samnium “at once,” and in response to Statius’ invitation, suggests that Hannibal may have been in contact with Statius, and perhaps with other disaffected figures among the allied states. If this is the case, his decision to continue pursuing his politico-military strategy may have been based on specific prior indications that disaffected elements in some cities were ready to come over once he defeated the Roman field army. This point is crucial. The Italian allies had even longer experience of Roman determination than Hannibal. So long as Roman armies remained at hand, rebellion continued to be a risky prospect; no one could be certain that in the next battle the Romans would not prevail against Hannibal as they had so often against other enemies in the past. In contrast, after Cannae, the Romans were reduced to a purely defensive posture. The risk of rebellion eliminated, at least for the time being; moreover, in the face of three crushing defeats in a row at Hannibal’s hands, the prospects of the Romans rallying to overcome him in the foreseeable future appeared slim. Disaffected elements throughout southern Italy may have made it clear to Hannibal that once he disposed of the Roman army, they would be ready to act.

In order to continue the momentum for his offensive operation against the Roman army while he garrisoned men to protect any defecting allies, it became clear Hannibal needed reinforcements. As mentioned previously, the Carthaginian senate held the key to

⁶⁴⁰ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.1.1 & 3. “Hannibal post Cannensem pugnam castraque capta ac direpta confestim ex Apulia in Samnium moverat, accitus in Hirpinos a Statio Trebio pollicente se Compsam traditurum... Post famam Cannensis pugnae volgatumque Trebi sermonibus adventum Hannibalis cum Mopsiani urbe excessissent, sine certamine tradita urbs Poeno praesidiumque acceptum est.”

conscripted troops and mercenaries from Africa and Spain. Without the senate's support Hannibal had to rely only on those allies he had made along the way in Gaul and Italy for manpower. If Carthage continued to maintain its defensive stance, these much-needed additional forces would be sent to Spain to protect Carthaginian interests there rather than to supplement his initiatives in Italy. Realizing only a first-hand persuasive plea to the senate might achieve his purpose, Hannibal sent his younger brother Mago directly to Carthage.

While it is not viable to establish the validity of Livy's set-piece speeches between Mago and Hanno, it is undoubtedly clear there were major differences of opinion between the two factions controlling the senate. According to Livy when Mago addresses the Carthaginian senate in late summer 216, to emphasize the scale of Hannibal's victory against the Roman armies at Cannae and as a more visual demonstration, he pours onto the floor of the senate the mass of golden rings taken from the hands of dead or captured Romans of the equestrian class; "...when measured, they filled as some historians assert, three pecks and a half."⁶⁴¹ Only then does Mago make Hannibal's request for support including the need for "...reinforcements...money to pay them [the troops], and grain."⁶⁴²

It is obvious Hannibal understood that perception was occasionally more important than reality. Good leaders pay as much attention to how their actions are perceived as they do to what they have accomplished. Robert E. Lee demonstrated his belief in perception after the battle of Antietam [Sharpsburg]. On September 17th the Confederates lost over 10,000 men. All of Lee's officers favoured an immediate retreat; however, Lee wanting to search for stragglers and move his wounded men, decided to stay put. His decision: if McClellan wants to fight the following morning, so be it.

⁶⁴¹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.12.2. "...fama tenuit, quae propior vero est, haud plus fuisse modio."

⁶⁴² Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.12.5. "...mittendam in stipendium pecuniam frumentumque..."

McClellan had no interest or intention in fighting the following days as he concluded, “...the success of an attack on the 18th was not certain.”⁶⁴³ Lee reported to President Davis that he withdrew after nightfall on the 18th after “...finding the enemy indisposed to make an attack.”⁶⁴⁴ Lee’s first invasion of the North had ended in failure; but, by refusing to accept Lee’s challenge to renew the battle, McClellan gave the Confederates the “perception” of at least a partial victory. General Lee issued the following to his army:

“On the field of Sharpsburg, with less than one-third his numbers, you resisted from daylight until dark the whole army of the enemy, and repulsed every attack...The whole of the following you stood prepared to resume the conflict on the same ground, and retired next morning without molestation across the Potomac...History records fewer examples of greater fortitude and endurance than this army has exhibited, and I am commissioned by the President to thank you in the name of the Confederate States for the undying fame you have won.”⁶⁴⁵

In spite of the successive Roman disasters, and the spreading revolt in southern Italy, none of the Latins had broken away, and there had been no sign of disaffection or defeatism in Rome itself. So long as the Romans and their Latin co-ethnics held fast, Rome still had a vast pool of manpower to drawn on, and plainly their defeats to date had not driven the Romans to sue for peace – the rejection of the prisoner ransom being at least in part an implicit rejection in advance of any settlement offer. The 1st Roman War – as Hanno goes on to observe – gave ample evidence of Roman resilience even in the face

⁶⁴³ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 232.

⁶⁴⁴ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 232.

⁶⁴⁵ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 233.

of disastrous setbacks.⁶⁴⁶ Again, Livy set the scene to show that Hannibal had not effectively accomplished these events by using Hanno as the voice of reason, “Therefore, we have the war intact, as truly as we had on the day on which Hannibal crossed into Italy.”⁶⁴⁷ But under the circumstances, this argued precisely in favour of sending the reinforcements Mago sought. Whatever Hanno thought of the war policy, Carthage was now drawn in far too deeply to do anything other than press forward, and there could hardly be a better time to do so.

However as with Lee the perception Mago presented with the mass of golden rings proved far more influential than what Hannibal had actually accomplished. The Carthaginian senate voted to send 4,000 Numidians and 40 elephants to Hannibal, along with a large amount of money, as well as further money to hire reinforcements in Spain.⁶⁴⁸ In the spring of 215 to the first reinforcements would be added a second more substantial number: 12,000 infantry, 1,500 cavalry, 20 elephants, and 60 warships, which Mago would direct to Italy.⁶⁴⁹

While Mago remained in Carthage the absence of an efficient seaport in Italy continued to upset Hannibal’s entire operation. Although he must have had little expectation that Neapolis would capitulate, he used a perfect exercise in intimidation tactics against the Neapolitans. Upon arrival he divided a force of Numidians, ordering one group to make a display of captured booty before the walls of the city while he placed the others in ambush positions. If the Neapolitans were not swayed by the initial display

⁶⁴⁶ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.13.

⁶⁴⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.12.15-13.2. “ ‘Cum id quoque negasset, ‘Bellum igitur’ inquit ‘tam integrum habemus quam habuimus qua die Hannibal in Italiam est transgressus.’ ”

⁶⁴⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.13.

⁶⁴⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.32.5-6.

of plunder, they might be by the defeat of their cavalry. When a body of the Neapolitan cavalry ventured outside the walls of the city against the visible Numidians, Hannibal ordered their ambush by the rest.⁶⁵⁰ Even so their defeat did not produce the expected result: the Neapolitans held firm. Having no desire to become bogged down in a siege attempt, Hannibal chose to decline. He certainly had no reason to attempt a siege against a purely secondary objective such as Neapolis when he had rejected that option against the city of Rome itself.

His failure to secure a seaport certainly set back his plans for the arrival of reinforcements from Carthage. Therefore, having gained the defection of Capua and other cities, Hannibal again made an effort to secure Neapolis as a landing point for Carthaginian assistance.⁶⁵¹ Yet again, they showed no more dispositions to defect from the Roman alliance than on his first approach. The situation probably would have been very different if a Carthaginian fleet carrying a reinforcing army had appeared off the harbour of Neapolis at any point during this phase of the campaign. No such fleet appeared. It was not until the following year that Carthage assembled the second of the expeditionary forces promised to Mago with the intent of reinforcing Hannibal. A combination of setbacks in Spain and potential opportunities in Sardinia arose, causing a redirection in the priorities by the Senate to negate their promises to Mago and the force was sent to Spain instead.⁶⁵² As a result Hannibal remained on his own resources.

Hannibal depended entirely on Carthaginian readiness to take energetic action at sea. The previous Carthaginian raids against Italy had been feeble attempts, turning back almost at the first sight of a Roman fleet. But Cannae potentially changed the naval

⁶⁵⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.21.

⁶⁵¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.14-15.

⁶⁵² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.32.

situation almost as dramatically as it changed the situation on land. As noted in the previous chapter, after the battle, the Romans reassigned large numbers of marines to their depleted land army.⁶⁵³ As many as fifty quinqueremes must have been stripped of troops and rendered useless for service or a larger number drawn down, with their fighting value severely impaired. The opportunity was certainly open for Carthage to send an expeditionary force, which the Romans would have found much harder to block at sea. Hannibal indeed took measures to encourage them to do so. With Rome contained north of Campania they could no longer benefit from the fleet's valuable relay points – the ports of Puteoli and Neapolis on the Tyrrhenian Sea, Rhegium in the Straits of Messina, Brundisium and Tarentum on the Adriatic.

The Alliance with Capua

Hannibal ventured north to Capua in 215, where although the ruling classes resisted his overtures, he knew the plebians remained in a state of unrest since Rome's defeat at Lake Trasimene. Because the Capuan nobility was linked to Rome through intermarriage,⁶⁵⁴ Carthage held 300 of their sons who had served Rome in Sicily as hostage.⁶⁵⁵ The political machinations of the local ruler Pacuvius Calavius, the son-in-law of Ap. Claudius Pulcher and the father-in-law of M. Livius Salinator, consul for the year 219, resolved this situation.⁶⁵⁶ By persuading the people's assembly that when the new elections were held they could choose no better representation, he sealed his authority on the forcible reconciliation of both sides, allowing him to procure a settlement with

⁶⁵³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 22.57.

⁶⁵⁴ Note the importance of the family links between Capuan elite and Roman Senators – an increasing phenomenon.

⁶⁵⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.4.8.

⁶⁵⁶ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.2; and note 1 on page 4.

Hannibal.⁶⁵⁷ In the wake of Cannae defection from Rome was ripe, however, under pressure from the families who were the most pledged to Rome, they sent a delegation to the surviving consul, Varro, seeking Rome's assistance.

Varro told the delegates quite bluntly that with the Roman armies in their present state they could no longer rely on any other than their own forces if they were to avoid falling into the hands of the Carthaginian forces.

“ ‘For what has been left to us at Cannae, so that, as if we had something, we may wish what is lacking to be made up by the allies? Are we to requisition infantry from you, as though we had cavalry? Are we to say that money is lacking, as if that alone were lacking? Nothing has fortune left us, even to supplement. Legions, cavalry, arms, standards, horses and men, money and supplies have vanished either in the battle or in the loss of two camps the next day. And so you, Campanians, have not to help us in war, but almost to undertake the war in our stead.’”⁶⁵⁸

The Capuans only heard Varro's admission of Rome's powerlessness, causing these same delegates to seek out Hannibal. They,

“...made an alliance with him on these terms: that no general or magistrate of the Carthaginians should have any authority over a Campanian citizen, and that no

⁶⁵⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.3.

⁶⁵⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.5.5-7. “ ‘Quid enim nobis ad Cannas relictum est, ut, quasi aliquid habeamus, id quod deest expleri ab sociis velimus? Pedites vobis imperemus, tamquam equites habeamus? Pecuniam deesse dicamus, tamquam ea tantum desit? Nihil, ne quod suppleremus quidem, nobis reliquit fortuna. Legiones, equitatus, arma, sugns, equi virique, pecunia, commeatus aut in acie aut binis postero die amissis castris perierunt. Itaque non iuvetis nos in bello oportet, Campani, sed paene bellum pro nobis suscipiatis.’”

Campanian citizen should be a soldier or perform any service against his will;
that Capua should have its own laws, its own magistrates;...⁶⁵⁹

Capua had no reason to rebel against Rome only to be ruled by either Hannibal or Carthage; in turn Hannibal had no interest in establishing a Carthaginian empire in Italy – only in overturning that of Rome. The same may be said of the provision that no Carthaginian civil magistrate should have authority over Campanian citizens. The military provisions were problematic however. Carthaginian generals – including Hannibal – were barred from having any authority over Campanians in the field, precluding unified command of any allied army. The very existence of an allied army was placed in doubt, since if “no Campanian citizen should be a soldier...against his will,”⁶⁶⁰ this provision ruled out a military draft. Presumably it did not bar the Capuan authorities from drafting their own citizens, but they made no commitment to do so; and certainly no commitment was made to put an army at Hannibal’s disposal. In short, the terms of the “alliance” allowed Capua to enjoy the full fruits of Hannibal’s successes against Rome plus his protection, but did not obligate positive support for their common cause. Capua became something more than a friendly neutral, but less than an active ally. Strategically, apart from its value as a secure base, the “alliance” with Capua operated only in the negative sense; the manpower resources of Capua and Campania were subtracted from those available to Rome, without being added to those available to Hannibal.

The agreement with Capua set an implicit precedent; having agreed to terms with Capua that offered him less than active support in the war effort, Hannibal could not

⁶⁵⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.7.1-2. “...pacemque cum eo his condicionibus fecerunt, ne quis imperator magistratusve Poenorum ius ullum in civem Campanum haberet, neve civis Campanus invitus militaret munusve faceret; ut suae leges, sui magistratus Capuae essent;...”

⁶⁶⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.7.1-2.

expect other cities who broke away from Rome to offer him more. If excessive demands on Hannibal's part dissuaded the Capuans from making a breach with Rome, other cities might follow their negative example. Hannibal would be left scarcely better off than he had been after Lake Trasimene, with only the district around Compsa as a base, no significant erosion in the overall Roman political position, and little prospect of recruiting enough soldiers to make good the attrition of campaigning.

If Hannibal accepted the Capuan semi-alliance, even on the less than satisfactory terms offered, their rebellion might well trigger a wave of further defections from Rome. The Romans would then be compelled to use whatever strength they recovered to try and quell the rebellions. And, any city attacked by the Romans would necessarily become a *de facto* military ally of Hannibal, even in the absence of any agreement to that effect. Hannibal might then be able to let the Italian rebels bear the main brunt of the war, employing his own army as a strategic reserve, marching to the support of rebel cities, who found themselves particularly hard-pressed. Some such calculation – the combined effect of sheer necessity, the prospect of triggering a domino effect of defections from Rome, and perhaps the continuing hope of direct support from Carthage – must have underlain Hannibal's acceptance of the limited Capuan offer.

To seal the agreement, Hannibal sent a garrison to occupy and protect Capua. Although severely restraining his future options, in the long run the agreement proved much worse for Capua than for Hannibal. In seeking to enjoy his protection with minimal effort on their part, they did nothing to ensure victory, however, they would still bear the full brunt of defeat if the war should turn in favour of Rome.

In the aftermath of Cannae, there must have been a real concern among the Romans and their remaining allies whether Roman troops could challenge Hannibal's under any conditions. If they could not, the Roman political collapse might have become

uncontrollable. As it was, Roman capabilities were so depleted that they could offer no support to many allies, and Hannibal was able to gain some without a battle.⁶⁶¹

Hannibal Continues to Solidify His Base in Southern Italy

After securing Capua as a base, Hannibal moved in the direction of the coast. Instead of moving north into Umbria, Hannibal moved south. He did not think he needed to go into the North because he already had most of the Gauls as allies, plus the Etruscans and Umbrians would not have wanted battles fought on their own territory. They would have been more upset by the devastation to their land than he could possibly have gained in allies. In addition the political situation in Nola potentially favoured Hannibal; as described by Livy, “The senate and especially its leading members stood loyally by the alliance with Rome. But the common people, as usual, were all for a change of government and for Hannibal...”⁶⁶² Livy presents a picture of fierce factionalism in most of the cities of southern Italy between those who wished to dominate the state and the established political elite. His claim that in the majority of the cities it was the poorer classes, which favoured rebellion against Rome and the wealthier citizens who hoped to preserve their alliance, is more than likely influenced by his lack of sympathy for politicians who relied on the common masses for support. Still, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the leaders wishing to remove the existing elite were the most likely to

⁶⁶¹ Further pertinent information on the alliance with Capua can be found in Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 218-222 & 243-248; E. Bradford, Hannibal, pages 126-131 & T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 476-492.

⁶⁶² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.14.7. “Senatus ac maxime primores eius in societate Romana cum fide perstare; plebs novarum, ut solet, rerum atque Hannibalis tota esse...”

appeal for popular support, and also to favour an agreement with Carthage.⁶⁶³ The actual divisions in Nola were somewhat more complex, and the same was very probably true in other cities as well.

The cities of the Hellenized south of Italy, having a long history of resistance to Roman subjugation and having a powerful non-Latin regional sense of identity, were far more vulnerable to Hannibal's overtures than the central core of Latins and loyal Italian. In Livy's description of the defection of the Greek cities of Locri, Croton, and Tarentum he stresses the strong network of local contacts and alliances who were independent of Rome, as well as a high level of internal political conflict and instability.⁶⁶⁴ It is clear Hannibal provided the opportunity and impetus for internal political dissention within these cities to crystallize. For example, at Capua, though Pacavius Calvius had close kinship ties with the Roman nobility, he used Hannibal as an opportunity to bring his faction into power through an advantageous treaty with Carthage.⁶⁶⁵ At Croton, Hannibal exploited the long-standing animosities between the Greeks and their Bruttian neighbours to persuade the city to secede to Carthage. And there is a clear indication by Livy that the defection of Croton led to the events at Locri.⁶⁶⁶

Upon the Nolan senate's request for support, Rome sent a detachment under the praetor Claudius Marcellus, causing Hannibal to turn temporarily aside and attack

⁶⁶³ For the desire of the poorer classes for change and the loyalty of the aristocracy to Rome see Livy, 23.14.7-12; 24.13.8; 24.2.8-11; For examples of aristocratic leaders forcing defection see Livy, 23.30.8; 24.47.6.

⁶⁶⁴ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 24.1.1-3; 25.8.3-13.10; 25.15.2-5.

⁶⁶⁵ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.1.1-4.

⁶⁶⁶ K. Lomas, *Roman Italy, 336 B.C. – AD 200*, pages 24-26.

Nucera. With no hope of holding out, the entire population of Nucera abandoned the town, leaving it open for Hannibal's troops to plunder.⁶⁶⁷

Abandoning the siege of Nola as unprofitable – he plainly could no longer count on internal disaffection to deliver over the city – Hannibal moved on to Acerrae. Here the population, or at least the upper classes, simply abandoned the city, as at Nucera, allowing Hannibal another opportunity to plunder.⁶⁶⁸ When town of Petelia appealed to Rome for help, the Romans sent word they could offer none, and in effect told the Petelians their surrender would not be held against them. Petelia attempted to hold out and did so successfully for some months, largely because Hannibal was too committed to other operations to deal with it at once, however the next year it fell to him.⁶⁶⁹

Returning again to Nola, Hannibal hoped that in spite of the Roman garrison in place, internal political divisions might deliver the city to him. Livy's subsequent story portrays the nature of the political and personal dynamics operating in cities across southern Italy. Marcellus held on in Nola...

“...not more by confidence in his force than by the good-will of the leading citizens. He was apprehensive of the common people and above all of Lucius Bantius, who was impelled by the consciousness of an attempted revolt and by fear of the Roman praetor, now to betray his native city, now, if fortune should not favour him in that, to desert.”⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁷ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.15.

⁶⁶⁸ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.17.

⁶⁶⁹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.30.

⁶⁷⁰ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.15.7. “...non sui magis fiducia praesidii quam voluntate principum habebat; plebs timebatur et ante omnis L. Bantius, quem conscientia temptatae defectionis ac metus a praetore Romano nunc ad prodicionem patriae, nunc, si ad id fortuna defuisset, ad transfugiendum stimulabat.”

Bantius, most certainly not a commoner, is described as "...a young man of spirit and at that time almost the best-known horseman among the allies,"⁶⁷¹ hence presumably an aristocrat, the equivalent at least of equestrian rank. After being wounded while serving with the Roman allied cavalry at Cannae, he had been well treated and sent home by Hannibal. Hannibal's intent, as with his lenient treatment of allied war prisoners in general, was precisely to create potential foci of rebellion against Rome. Such foci might well be disaffected nobles rather than commoners; indeed, it would be nobles, whether or not as leaders of populist factions, who would be in the best position to foment a rebellion.

Marcellus correctly assessed Bantius' disaffection as due to personal ambition and restlessness rather than to either anti-Roman or populist sentiments.

"...since he had either to be restrained by punishment or else won over by kindness, Marcellus preferred rather to gain for himself a brave and energetic ally than merely to take such a man away from the enemy, and summoning him addressed him kindly... 'Under me you will have every advancement and every reward, and the more constantly you are with me, the more you will feel that it is a distinction and an advantage to you.' The youth was delighted with the promises, and Marcellus gave him a fine horse and ordered the quaestor to pay him five hundred denarii. The lictors were bidden to allow him access to the commander whenever he wished."⁶⁷²

⁶⁷¹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.15.8. "Erat iuvenis acer et sociorum ea tempestate prope nobilissimus eques."

⁶⁷² Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.15.10 & 14-15. "Ceterum cum aut poena cohibendus esset aut beneficio conciliandus, sibi adsumpsisse quam hosti ademisse fortem ac strenuum maluit socium, accitumque ad se benigne appellat:... 'apud me tibi omnis honos atque omne praemium erit, et quo frequentior mecum fueris, senties eam rem tibi dignitati atque emolumento esse.' Laetoque iuveni promissis equum eximium dono dat, bigatosque quingentos quaestorem numerare iubet; lictoribus imperat ut eum se adire quotiens velit

These blandishments proved fully effective: “By this kindness on the part of Marcellus the high spirit of the young man was as so tempered that thereafter none of the allies more bravely and loyally aided the Roman cause.”⁶⁷³

Although Rome won back Lucius Bantius to the Roman cause, disaffected elements in the city continued to negotiate with Hannibal. An arrangement was reached to close the gates of the city after the Roman force deployed for battle, but the plan was revealed to Marcellus,⁶⁷⁴ and as Hannibal’s force drew up in battle order, the Romans failed to appear. Hannibal correctly guessed that the rebels’ plan had failed, ordering part of his force “...back to the camp, with orders to bring up in haste to the front line all the equipment for besieging the city. He was quite confident that, if he should press the hesitating, the common people would stir up some outbreak in the city.”⁶⁷⁵ In context, “equipment for besieging” must have meant scaling ladders, battering rams, and other gear for a direct assault on the walls, rather than for a siege. In the face of an assault by Hannibal’s army, even unorganized disaffection within the city might well lead to a collapse of the defense.

Similar processes of personal influence must have been at work in cities across southern Italy in the post-Cannae environment, whether or not acted upon directly by either Hannibal or the Romans. The political status quo in the cities had been decisively

patiantur. Hac comitate Marcelli ferocis iuvenis animus adeo est mollitus ut nemo inde sociorum rem Romanam fortius ac fidelius iuverit.”

⁶⁷³ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.16.1. “Hac comitate Marcelli ferocis iuvenis animus adeo est mollitus ut nemo inde sociorum rem Romanam fortius ac fidelius iuverit.”

⁶⁷⁴ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.16.

⁶⁷⁵ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.16.11. “...in castra remittit iussos propere adparatum omnem oppugnandae urbis in primam aciem adferre, satis fidens, si cunctantibus instaret, tumultum aliquem in urbe plebem moturam.”

upset, opening the way for ambitious men to promote themselves by offering their support to one side or the other; if the side they chose won, they could expect to reap the rewards of their service.

A more complex series of events took place at Casilinum. A force of Roman allied troops from Praeneste had not joined the main Roman army in time for the battle of Cannae; after that disaster they took refuge in Casilinum. The city was divided into two sections by a river with the Praenestine troops quartered themselves on one side. After word reached the Praenestines that the city might be delivered over to Hannibal, they killed or expelled the citizens from their quarter, placing themselves in a state of defense.⁶⁷⁶ When Hannibal laid siege to this half of the city, the Praenestines mounted an active defense; “When they actually sallied out once, he almost cut off their retreat by sending a column of elephants against them, and drove them in alarm into the city...”⁶⁷⁷

As the siege dragged on, Hannibal sent most of his army into winter quarters at Capua. To end the siege the Romans paid a considerable ransom for the Praenestine’s release and Hannibal allowed them to withdraw from the city. The Romans granted the Praenestines double pay for the time they had been besieged and a five-year exemption from further military service, along with an offer, which was declined, of Roman citizenship.⁶⁷⁸

The Romans had refused to pay ransom for the prisoners of war at Cannae, but the circumstances were now entirely different. The prisoners at Cannae were considered to

⁶⁷⁶ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.30.

⁶⁷⁷ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.18.6. “Semel ultro erumpentis agmine elephantorum opposito prope interclusit trepidosque conpulit in urbem...” The mention of elephants suggests that reinforcement from Carthage had in fact reached Hannibal by this time.

⁶⁷⁸ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.19.

have surrendered at a stroke; the Praenestines had put up a prolonged and heroic resistance. It was in the Roman interest to reward their service, even to pay ransom for their release. No implicit hint of capitulation in ransoming them out could now be assumed. Offering and accepting the ransom was the simplest way for Hannibal to eliminate a Roman strong point that otherwise might hold out some time longer, meanwhile tying down badly needed troops for other operations.

Petelia held out without Roman assistance until 215 when Hannibal found himself involved in campaigns against Croton and Locri in Magna Graecia.⁶⁷⁹ Here he discovered a complicated new set of problems.⁶⁸⁰ Each city that failed to rebel and come over to his side constituted a potential Roman strong point. Roman armies might operate against the rebels while using these loyal cities as safe bases upon which they could fall back in order to avoid direct confrontation with his army. Hannibal's means of dealing with these potential Roman bases varied. In the weakest cities, such as Nucera and Acerrae, a threatening move proved sufficient; the inhabitants merely abandoned the towns. Whereas in Nola, Hannibal attempted to combine a military assault with political support from disaffected factions within the town; the attempt failed when the political support did not materialize. A siege of such a well-defended city would have cost too much time and too many resources; Hannibal had to leave it under Roman control. Petelia, pro-Roman, but without access to direct Roman support, he besieged, presumably with a limited detachment of his forces, and eventually captured with Roman approval. Casilinum, with its scratch garrison of Praenestines, Hannibal also besieged, eventually allowing the Praenestines to withdraw when Rome paid his ransom demands.

⁶⁷⁹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.20.4-8.

⁶⁸⁰ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.30.

With the political dynamic now changed, many who had hesitated before were now ready to act. Up until this point what Hannibal accomplished had been in absolute accord with his original plans. In the year 214/13 Hannibal should have been particularly delighted when a small group of noblemen from Tarentum approached him. They indicated they represented a pro-Carthaginian faction in the city who would readily surrender the city if he would bring his army within sight of Tarentum's walls.

Tarentum, the largest seaport in Southern Italy, was ideally situated for the Carthaginians. It would serve as a base of operations from which a fleet could sail from North Africa; the city could be used as a supply point as well as a disembarkation port for incoming reinforcements. But, once again, as with Pyrrhus the Tarentines proved unreliable. Unsuccessful, Hannibal retired to winter on the Adriatic Coast.⁶⁸¹ Unlike their fellow Greeks of Neapolis and Cumae, the Romans suspected the Tarentines – probably in view of their earlier conduct – of being untrustworthy allies. For this reason they had been forced to send hostages to Rome as surety of their good behaviour. Some of the hostages attempted an escape and, when recaptured by the Romans, were put to death with great cruelty – something, which made the anti-Roman party in Tarentum even more hostile. They must have reached the conclusion that they would fare better under the Carthaginians, whose generosity to other towns and cities such as Capua was well known.

Yet, it was at this time that his forces suffered their first, and only serious blow on Italian soil. Hannibal sent orders for Hanno to march his Carthaginian reinforcements and newly recruited troops from Bruttium north to join him in Campania.⁶⁸² No doubt Hannibal intended to take the ports of Neapolis and Cumae with this enlarged army, but Hanno was forestalled by the arrival of Tiberius Gracchus and heavily defeated in the

⁶⁸¹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 24.17.8; 20.9-14.

⁶⁸² Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 24.15.2.

ensuing battle.⁶⁸³ Although Hanno escaped, the relief army Hannibal so badly needed was largely destroyed. The Romans proceeded to attack a number of small towns in Lucania⁶⁸⁴ and Samnium⁶⁸⁵ with their penalty for defection to the Carthaginians paid with many lives and the confiscation of their property.

Hannibal Defends His Allies

Hannibal never envisioned he would be required to command an army of occupation. His strength rested in offensively led open-group battles, where he proved unbeatable. Once the Roman generals realized his tactics, they stayed among the mountains or behind walls where they could maintain the advantage. At first the cities siding with Hannibal were a strong point to his cause; they provided him access to the towns and supplies he sorely needed, but as Fabius reinitiated a “scorched earth” policy, he enforced stern laws designed to prevent Hannibal from obtaining cooperation and/or supplies. He set about to ravage the countryside around Capua destroying or carrying off crops, and laying waste to much of southern Italy. The new allies brought additional responsibilities since Hannibal had to provide garrisons for protection of the civil populations, wealth, supplies, and the ultimate source, the land with his diminishing army, for without control of the land – or at least enough land – the cities could eventually be starved out.

Additionally, Hannibal had to turn aside from his own operations to come to the rescue of ineffectual allies’ intrigues. At one point, “...the Campanians attempted without assistance to reduce the state of Cumae to subjection, at first tempting them to revolt from

⁶⁸³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.14-16.

⁶⁸⁴ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.19.

⁶⁸⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.3-6.

the Romans. When that failed they contrived a ruse to entrap them.”⁶⁸⁶ The ruse involved inviting the Cumaean leadership to a pan-Campanian religious festival, at which they would be seized. The Cumaeans evidently got wind of the plan. They sent word to the Romans, who sent an army under the new consul Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus. Gracchus succeeded in ambushing the Campanians as the latter lay in wait to ambush the Cumaeans. Hannibal was forced to come to retrieve the situation, which he could do only partially; he laid siege to Cumae, but abandoned the effort,⁶⁸⁷ again presumably because a siege against determined defenders would take too long and tie down too much of his army.

The Hirpini and Samnites also revolted against Rome, only to find themselves under pressure from a Roman counteroffensive.⁶⁸⁸ They sent a delegation to Hannibal to ask for assistance, and to complain of having received none previously. Hannibal’s reply, as reported by Livy, hints at his frustration at such calls for aid:

“...Hannibal replied that the Hirpini and Samnites were doing everything at once, reporting their losses, and asking for troops, and complaining that they were undefended and neglected. But they ought first to have reported, then asked for protection, finally, if this was not obtained, they should then, and not sooner, have complained that help had been besought in vain.”⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁶ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.35.2. “Campani per se adorti sunt rem Cumanam suae dicionis facere, primo sollicitantes ut ab Romanis deficerent; ubi id parum processit, dolum ad capiendos eos comparant.”

⁶⁸⁷ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.35-37.

⁶⁸⁸ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.41-42.

⁶⁸⁹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.43.1-2. “...Hannibal respondit, omnia simul facere Hirpinos Samnitesque, et indicare clades suas et petere praesidium et queri indefensos se neglectosque. Indicandum autem primum fuisse, dein petendenique querendum frustra opem inploratam.”

This passage in itself reflects Hannibal may have felt he was being dragged into defensive operations on behalf of allies, operations in which the Romans had the initiative. As well as attempting to clear out Roman strong points, Hannibal had to deal as well with the ally's own military inefficiency. In some cases, such as the Hirpini and Samnites, the problem was unavoidable. However much Hannibal might be annoyed by their complaints, rebellions such as theirs were precisely what he had come to Italy to foment. The natural role of his army was to reinforce those rebellions, though as he pointed out to the Hirpini and Samnite representatives, this was more effectively done by taking the war directly to the Romans and their remaining allies than by rushing about in response to Roman counter-offensives.

Yet in the Campanians' misfired attempt against Cumae, Hannibal paid the price of the terms of alliance he had concluded with Capua. The Campanians were able to raise several thousand men for this operation, although most were killed or captured.⁶⁹⁰ These men, if enrolled in Hannibal's own army, under his discipline and leadership, doubtless could have been forged into good soldiers, a valued addition to his force. Instead, the Campanian rebel leaders squandered them, giving the Romans a badly needed victory, and generally leaving a mess for Hannibal to clean up.

Instead of snowballing the rebellion had stagnated, confined essentially to Campania and neighbouring areas where Hannibal's army operated. The areas in rebellion were far too limited to cut critically into Rome's manpower base; Rome could still raise armies, indeed larger ones than it had risen before. Moreover, the terms of alliance Hannibal accepted with Capua meant that even though their manpower was subtracted from Rome he could not add it to his own support base. Far from providing a

⁶⁹⁰ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 23.35.

steady flow of recruits to Hannibal's force, the Capuans responded to the Roman mobilization of 214 with a cry for help:

“Accordingly, they sent legates to Hannibal to beg him to bring his army to Capua. New armies, they said, were being enrolled at Rome for besieging it, and the defection of no city had more embittered the Romans. Since they reported this with such excitement, Hannibal, thinking he must make haste, lest he be anticipated by the Romans, set out from Arpi and established himself by Tifata in his old camp above Capua.”⁶⁹¹

Hannibal's plan of campaign had to be set aside to guard the Capuans. Capua and the other Campanian rebel cities, which had for generations been part of the Roman alliance and military system, must have had a great many men who had been trained in the Roman method of warfare, and centurions and cohort commanders capable of leading them. In spite of Livy's structures about Capuan decadence, the performance of Roman allies throughout the war gives little reason to suppose that the Capuans, and Campanians in general, could not have been as effective as soldiers as those who remained loyal to Rome, and Campania should have been able to raise the equivalent of several legions with which to defend themselves, with all the advantages of fighting on their own ground, with numerous fortified strong points available to them. Instead, Hannibal had to detach

⁶⁹¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.12.2-3. “...perpulissee magnam partem se iuventutis Tarentinae referunt ut Hannibalis amicitiam ac societatem quam populi Romani mallent, legatosque ab suis missos rogare Hannibalem ut exercitum propius Tarentum admoveat: si signa eius, si castra conspecta a Tarento sint, haud ullam intercessuram moram quin in deditionem veniat urbs; in potestate iuniorum plebem, in manu plebis rem Tarentinam esse.”

part of his army, good Numidian and Spanish troops, to help guard Capua;⁶⁹² making those troops unavailable for his own operations.

And these operations did not prove productive. The psychological state of Hannibal's troops reached its peak at Cannae, where they faced the climactic encounter with almost the entire military power of Roman, an army that vastly outnumbered them. After the battle, the extreme intensity of their pitch could hardly be sustained. In addition, the new course of the war must already have become evident to Hannibal's troops by the end of the campaign season in 216. Rome was not going to collapse; the war would continue. For the soldiers it was no longer a stark matter of conquer or die, but of hoping to survive rather than falling protecting an ally or surviving a minor skirmish against the Romans. Hannibal's army continued to suffer a steady attrition from skirmishes against the Romans or their loyalist allies.

Troop morale and efficiency may also have declined somewhat from the high point of Cannae, though at worst Hannibal's army went from being an outstanding one to merely a very good one. Nevertheless, Livy's account of Capua mentions a trickle of desertions, something that can hardly have been a problem previously, when deserters had no friendly haven in reach. Even if desertions were modest, they were still another form of attrition of a force increasingly stretched thin by the commitments it had to meet. His allies, the cities that had rebelled against Rome, were of doubtful military value, more likely to call on him for rescue than to assist him effectively in opening new fronts against the Romans.

It was not merely a matter of maintaining food and supplies, but of finding men to replenish and strengthen the ranks of the Carthaginian army. He did receive some reinforcement from Carthage, even if far less than he had hoped or been promised. There

⁶⁹² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.12.

were two instances in which Carthage succeeded in breaking the Roman stranglehold, and both of them were by sea: in 215 when they landed 4,000 Numidians and 40 elephants at Locri and in 205 when 12,000 infantry and 2,000 horse reached Liguria.⁶⁹³ Hannibal had gambled that he would receive support from the disaffected people of the Italian peninsula and later his army included large numbers of Italian “deserters” as the Romans regarded them.

The central and southern Italians, with the exception of those in the major city of Capua, never switched sides in great numbers or for long stretches of time. Hannibal tended to act as a conqueror of the Italian cities that he took away from Rome and he felt increasingly compelled to use diplomatic skill against them when the Romans’ superior skill in siege warfare allowed them to re-conquer these cities easily once Hannibal’s troops departed. Moreover, Hannibal did not have enough men to provide garrisons for the cities that had come over to his side. This meant that they were open to Roman reconquest and revenge and thus less prone to follow Hannibal’s cause.

The Use of Terror in the War

Carl von Clausewitz’s, *On War*, published shortly after Clausewitz’s death in 1831, presented the concept of total war: combat waged against the civilian population as well as military targets, with the object of reducing a people’s will to fight. Hannibal used the principals of total war effectively to shift opinion to his favour. Although he laid waste to the countryside as Rome laid siege to Casilinum, he did not plunder the lands of his allies either in Samnium or Lucania; however, when he marched near the Latin colony of Venusia he laid waste to those districts belonging to the Roman colonists. The terrorist

⁶⁹³ The troops who landed at Liguria never reached Hannibal who by then was bottled up in Italy’s southern region.

calls forceful attention to his presence, his power, and his cause, and can generate support by demonstrating the price of failure to give support.

As noted earlier, the Carthaginian army had scarcely come down from the Alps before Hannibal inserted himself into a local dispute and found or manufactured a pretext to attack the Taurini. That action brought him support from other Gauls, a support that accelerated after he demonstrated military success against the Romans as well. In peninsular Italy, he had further to contend with the likelihood that pro-Roman factions were established in control of allied communities. Hannibal needed to extract real costs for failing to rebel against Rome before local leaders would be induced to change sides, or local rivals to overthrow them and break off from the Roman Alliance System.

During the War Between the States, Gen. Grant's orders to Sherman were equally simple: he was to get into the interior of the enemy's country and inflict as much damage as possible against their war resources. The first part of the mission he accomplished merely by engaging Johnston's army; the second part included a new look at what constituted war resources. While Clausewitz would have agreed with Grant that victory requires destruction of the enemy's army, he also believed victory was a matter of destroying the will of the enemy to fight. That meant waging war against the civilian population and their property as well as against military targets. To Grant, the city of Atlanta and its railroads qualified as war resources, but Sherman convinced Grant to allow him to wage war on the people of the South, not only hitting military objectives, but cities, farms, and other civilian property as well. Sherman needed just three words to explain how he would wage total war in the Atlanta campaign and in the March to the Sea that followed it – he would “...make Georgia howl.”⁶⁹⁴ In Sherman's own words, “War is all cruelty, and there is no use trying to reform it; the crueller it is, the sooner it will be

⁶⁹⁴ B.H. Liddell Hart, Sherman: Soldier, Realist, American (New York, 1929), page 358.

ended. War is Hell.”⁶⁹⁵ On the Roman side, when it was realised that Hannibal could not be defeated in the field, they adopted a corresponding scorched earth policy and avoidance of pitched battles, which came to be known as the ‘Fabian tactics’. Cities who defected or submitted to Hannibal subsequently came under severe retribution from Rome once given the opportunity – whether to provide an example of the consequence to other cities or in abject brutality. Fabius Maximus carried out wanton destruction against the Samnite and Campanian regions. To complete the overturning of the Italian rural landscape, there then followed massive confiscations by Rome, which hit the city-states and peoples who sided with Hannibal. Such was the case of Capua’s territory, and a large part of Samnium, Lucania, Apulia, and Bruttium. Upon examination we find Sherman thought the South should suffer, especially South Carolina, since that is where the war began. He in fact declared, “The whole army is burning with an insatiable desire to wreck vengeance upon South Carolina. I almost tremble for her fate but feel she deserves all that seems in store for her.”⁶⁹⁶

In addition, the occupation of Roman and Italian land by Hannibal’s armies accomplished another, even more important objective in that the gigantic depredations committed by them added to the losses in tax revenues to the Roman treasury, which created an unprecedented economic shockwave in central and southern Italy. Hannibal produced a situation so severe Rome was compelled to make rapid adaptations in order to ward off the consequences. In the March to the Sea, while the Union soldiers lived off the land, they wrecked and burned whatever they did not need, thereby adding to the Confederacy’s economic ruin and to its psychological destruction. This is exactly the same goal Hannibal had in mind, though he did not envision such devastation. His was

⁶⁹⁵ B.H. Liddell Hart, Sherman, page 360.

⁶⁹⁶ B.H. Liddell Hart, Sherman, page 366.

more of a “selective war” rather than “total war”. The value of such actions can be seen in Vegetius,

“It is the mark of a skilled general to sow seeds of discord among the enemy. For no nation, however small, can be completely destroyed by its enemies, unless it devours itself by its own feuding. Civil strife is quick to compass the destruction of political enemies, but careless about the readiness of (the nation’s) own defense.”⁶⁹⁷

At Capua, a majority of the local senate, believing themselves to have been deserted by Carthage in 212, and still trusting the clemency of Rome, opened the town gates to the Roman army. The resulting destruction was merciless: they beheaded several notables, sold all Campanian citizens of Capua, Atella, and Calatia into slavery, and turned the city into an agricultural township, deprived of its lands and buildings. The year following the Praenestine abandonment of Casilinum the Romans under the consuls Marcus Marcellus and Quintus Fabius set siege to regain control of the city. When the Campanian inhabitants attempted to abandon the city, Marcellus massacred a number of them, the survivors fleeing to the protection of Quintus Fabius.

Through policies not unlike Sherman’s, Fabius and Marcellus demonstrated to the people of Italy that the Carthaginian army and Hannibal were powerless to defend their lives, homes, and property. Sherman argued that the swath of destruction his troops wrought on the South was a military necessity, but many historians have called the “March to the Sea” nothing less than a campaign of terrorism and have accused Sherman of the equivalent of war crimes. At the very least he did not restrain his troops from looting and arson. On the usefulness of total war, Bevin Alexander states,

⁶⁹⁷ Vegetius, Epitome of Military Science, page 88.

“The Civil War ended, and Sherman’s strategy of indirect attack had gained the victory. Unless he had seized Atlanta before the presidential election, Lincoln would not have been reelected. And the march through Georgia and the Carolinas destroyed the South’s will to continue the war.”⁶⁹⁸

During the siege of Casilinum and the siege of Vicksburg, we observe the citizens of both responding with equal courage and determination. At Vicksburg they dug caves in the yellow-clay hillsides, then furnished them with finery dragged out of their ruined houses. Weeks crawled by under pounding shells. The cave dwellers fought lice, rats, disease, boredom, and despair, eating their emaciated mules, horses, and dogs when all the food ran out. The siege so ingrained the citizens of Vicksburg that for over 80 years they would not celebrate the 4th of July because the surrender of Vicksburg came on 4 July 1863. We see the defenders of Casilinum reduced to eating dogs, rats, bark, and boiled leather. Some supplies were gotten to the garrison by floating amphorae filled with grain down the river on the current until Hannibal discovered the scheme. Even then, nuts were floated down on the current, a truly desperate measure. Hannibal, like Grant waged total war; they both used the civilian populations of the cities under siege to expedite their initiatives.

In addition Rome successfully used terror to hold cities against possible defection as in Lucius Pinarius’ ruthless actions in Sicily. As commander of a garrison in Henna, fearing a defection of the inhabitants, Pinarius ordered his soldiers to infiltrate and massacre the inhabitants. Livy reports,

“So by an act, it may be criminal, it may have been avoidable. Marcellus, without reproving the act, allowed the soldiers to plunder Hennensians, thinking the frightened Sicilians had been deterred from betraying their garrisons. And as was

⁶⁹⁸ B. Alexander, How Great Generals Win, page 167.

natural in the case of a city in the heart of Sicily and famous, whether for the remarkable natural defense of its site, or as hallowed everywhere by the footprints of Proserpina, long ago carried away, news of the massacre made its way over the whole of Sicily almost in a single day. And then in truth, since they thought that the abode, not of men only but also of gods, had been desecrated by an atrocious massacre, even those who till then had wavered went over to the Carthaginians.”⁶⁹⁹

By the time of the Henna massacre and the general Sicilian uprising, the Carthaginians had already actively intervened. In a similar action when Union soldiers began arresting and threatening Confederate civilians, Lee wrote General McClellan, “...Should your government treat...such service by these persons as a breach of parole and punish it accordingly this Government will resort to retaliatory measures as the only means of compelling the observance of the rules of civilized warfare.”⁷⁰⁰ Later, upon learning that a Union general had threatened to kill civilians in retaliation for the Confederate guerilla activity, Lee responded by stating he would immediately hang a captured Union officer for each murdered civilian. Lee explained his actions as follows: He would wage “...war on the terms chosen by our enemies until the voice of an outraged humanity shall compel a respect for the recognized usages of war.”⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.39.7-9. “Ita Henna aut malo aut necessario facinore retenta. Marcellus nec factum inprobavit et praedam Hennensium militibus concessit, ratus timore deterritos prodicionibus praesidiorum Siculos. Atque ea clades, ut urbis in media Sicilia sitae claraeque vel ob insignem munimento naturali locum vel ob sacrata omnia vestigiis raptae quondam Proserpinae, prope uno die omnem Siciliam pervasit; et quia caede infanda rebantur non hominum tantum sed etiam deorum sedem violatam esse, tum vero etiam qui ante dubii fuerant defecere ad Poenos.”

⁷⁰⁰ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 216.

⁷⁰¹ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 216.

Before Scipio could begin his African campaign, he first had to complete the subjugation of Spain, for both he and the Roman Senate realized the greater bulk of Hannibal's cash and materials were at located at Carthago Nova,⁷⁰² besides the city was home to many of the craftsmen necessary to create additional weaponry Hannibal so desperately needed. And for Scipio underlying the logistical initiative lingered the desire for punishment to those tribes who had sided with Carthage after the death of his father and uncle. He avenged the treachery of Illiturgis in a manner so drastic as to be an object lesson of its requital, the inhabitants put to death, and the city itself razed to the ground. Scipio made no attempt to subdue or refrain the fury of the troops. In allowing the obliteration of Illiturgis he had a direct purpose for the news so shook the defenders of Castulo that the Spanish commander secretly capitulated.⁷⁰³ Again a similar example can be seen when after Gen. Early attacked the outskirts of Washington, Gen. Grant ordered Sheridan, "...to devastate the whole area so thoroughly that a crow flying across over the valley would have to carry its own rations."⁷⁰⁴ Bridges, railroads, machine shops were burned or dismantled. Barns were burned, with their contents; food to feed the army and its animals was taken – three to four times as much as the army needed spoiled. Lee's soldiers were forced to starvations rations. Wholesale destruction the point of both actions.

Rome continued a policy of ruthlessness and massacres throughout the conflict with Hannibal and used brutality to punish those who – by Roman terms – were guilty of

⁷⁰² Regarding cash found by P. Scipio in 209 at Carthago Nova, see Polybius, The Histories, 10.19.1-2. On weaponry and craftsmen to make them, see Polybius, The Histories, 10.17.9 and Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 26.47.5-10..

⁷⁰³ B.H. Liddell Hart, Scipio Africanus: Greater than Napoleon (New York, 1926), pages 69-70.

⁷⁰⁴ B. Catton, The Civil War, page 224.

treachery to Rome. Polybius seems, cynically, to comment on this fact when he writes that the Roman capture of Carthago Nova in 209 B.C. gives a horrifying picture of the behaviour of Roman troops if they were compelled to take a city by storm.⁷⁰⁵ It seems the Roman Senate even condoned actions such as those by M. Claudius Marcellus and his troops for the cruel acts they inflicted upon the people of Syracuse in 212 B.C.⁷⁰⁶ If a community had been guilty of treachery to Rome, the sentence could be as lenient as in 210 when the Phocian Anticyra was looted by the Romans and the free population sold into slavery,⁷⁰⁷ or as brutal as the execution of 53 members of the Capuan senate followed by the murder of 172 notables by the proconsul Q. Fulvius Flaccus in 211 and 210 B.C. In 204 – even though the population had been taken by surprise by Hannibal's cavalry and had not turned hostile to Rome – according to Livy robbery and rape were committed by the Roman troops upon re-taking the city, with personal atrocities against the citizens by the commander, Pleminius at Locri⁷⁰⁸

Hannibal's Alliance with Philip V of Macedon

At the outset of Hannibal's invasion of Italy, Rome was directly involved with the Greek power nearest Italy when Demetrius of Pharos was forced to flee to the king of Macedon, Philip V in 219 B.C. Hearing of Rome's difficulties in Italy, and the disaster at Lake Trasimene in particular, Philip decided on a direct attack to overrun Rome's Illyrian allies. Encouraged by Demetrius in the summer of 216 Philip built and directed his fleet to intercept the Roman ships en route to support their Illyrian allies; however, news of the

⁷⁰⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 10.15.

⁷⁰⁶ A. Toynbee, Hannibal's Legacy: The Hannibalic War's Effects on Roman Life, Vol. II (Oxford, 1965), pages 608-609.

⁷⁰⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 26.26 & Polybius, The Histories, 9.39.

⁷⁰⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 29.6.17-18.

approaching warships caused Philip to panic. Later, Hannibal's overwhelming victory at Cannae, further encouraged Philip of Rome's current vulnerability and in 215 – allied with Hannibal – he launched an attack on Illyria, initiating ten years of inconclusive warfare against Rome.

What did the treaty of mutual assistance mean for Hannibal? How did the alliance play into Hannibal's second strategy? What did Hannibal expect Philip to do? Naturally, Philip regarded the Roman expansion with the gravest distrust. Later, Philip decided that the Roman defeat at Cannae in August 216 presented the perfect opportunity to check their advance. For Hannibal Macedonia possessed the resource that had led to Alexander's victories: manpower. The Macedonians were a fierce and warlike people who could put a large army into the field with a potential strength equal to Rome. Additionally Philip was a successful commander who had raised Macedonia to its greatest power since Alexander.⁷⁰⁹ Philip represented an opportunity to further destabilize Rome through a political conflict with Macedonia and the possibility for Hannibal to attain the manpower and supplies his Carthaginian army needed to succeed in Italy.⁷¹⁰

If we look at the circumstances following Lee's victory at Second Manassas, the British Foreign secretary in a response to the Prime Minister wrote,

"I agree with you that the time has come for offering meditation to the United States Government, with a view to recognition of the independence of the Confederates. I agree further that in case of failure, we ought ourselves to recognize the Southern States as an independent state."⁷¹¹

⁷⁰⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.33.4.

⁷¹⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.33.1.

⁷¹¹ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 234.

Later, after learning of Lee's advance into Maryland, the Prime Minister added:

"It is evident that a great conflict is taking place to the northwest of Washington...If the Federals sustain a grave defeat, they may be at once ready for mediation...If on the other hand, they should have the best of it, we may wait a while and see what follows."⁷¹²

A well-publicized triumph or failure, even one that does little harm to the enemy, can produce incalculable success or harm in the minds of the world community. Among those so influenced by Cannae was Philip V, King of Macedon who, because of his proximity to Italy,

"On first learning by report that Hannibal had crossed the Alps, although he had rejoiced at the outbreak of war between the Romans and Carthaginians, still, as their resources were not as yet known, he had wavered, uncertain which of the two peoples he wished to have the victory. Now that a third battle, a third victory, favoured the Carthaginians, he inclined to the side of success and sent ambassadors to Hannibal."⁷¹³

When Hannibal and Philip's ambassadors negotiated their mutual alliance against Rome, the terms clearly anticipated that Rome would still exist in a weakened state after their joint victory. The treaty pledged mutual protection between Philip V, Macedonia and its allies in Greece and Hannibal, Carthage and its future allies in Italy, Gaul, Liguria,

⁷¹² A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 234.

⁷¹³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.33.3-4. "Is ubi primum fama accepit Hannibalem Alpibus transgressum, ut bello inter Romanum Poenumque orto laetatus erat, ita utrius populi mallet victoriam esse incertis adhuc viribus fluctuatus animo fuerat. Postquam tertis iam pugna, tertia victoria cum Poenis erat, ad fortunam inclinavit legatosque ad Hannibalem misit;..."

and North Africa. Each was to deal fairly with the other; and in particular, they were to be allies in the war with Rome until victory was achieved. The treaty called for Philip to gain the following: once victory over Rome had been assured any peace treaty would forbid the Romans to make war against Philip and provide that “the Romans should no longer be masters of Coreyra, Apollonia, Epidamnos, Pharos, Dimale, the Parthinoi, or Atintania.”⁷¹⁴ The treaty makes no mention of any specific undertaking by Philip to aid Hannibal although Philip agreed to fight “on land and sea with all his might,”⁷¹⁵ the force actually specified is only for two hundred ships. Hannibal knew the time was ripe for naval support since Rome’s naval forces were greatly under manned. If safe lines of transport could be opened by sea, Carthage could send reinforcements - the recruiting grounds in Africa and potentially in Spain could provide him with troops once the sea-lanes were clear.⁷¹⁶

Livy certainly believed the Romans feared a direct Macedonian invasion of Italy, for in the autumn of 215, Marcus Valerius Laevinus was sent to Brundisium to protect the coast against war with Macedonia. Rome’s Illyrian allies lay almost directly opposite Brundisium, separated by the narrowest part of the Adriatic Sea.⁷¹⁷ Philip clearly assumed Rome’s preoccupation with Hannibal in Italy would free him in Illyria and his threat to the Illyrian protectorate led to a permanent Roman presence at Ocrinum where Laevinus

⁷¹⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 7.9.13.

“...μηδ’ ειναι ’Ρωμαιοις κυριους Κερκυραιων μηδ’ ’Απολλωνιατων και ’Επιδαμνιων μηδε Φαρου μηδε Διμαλης και Παρθινων μηδ’ ’Ατιντανιας.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 56.

⁷¹⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.33.10. “...sua terra marique gereret;...”

⁷¹⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 7.9; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, pages 42-56 & Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.33.10-11.

⁷¹⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.38.8-10; 23.48.3 & 24.10.4.

and his squadron wintered in 214-213.⁷¹⁸ For two years Laevinus did nothing to deter Philip. Nevertheless, the presence of the Roman fleet precluded any attempt by Philip to cross the Adriatic.

Although it is doubtful Hannibal ever seriously anticipated an invasion of Italy by Philip even though Livy indicates that Tarentum would have made a suitable port for a Macedonian disembarkation after Hannibal captured it in 212,⁷¹⁹ there is some evidence by Livy that Syracuse hoped for aid during the siege of the city by Rome.⁷²⁰ Philip did not render assistance at once. As his ambassadors returned from Italy, a roving Roman patrol intercepted their ship. Upon reports of the ambassadors' capture, Philip sent another party of envoys, which again made contact with Hannibal. This time they managed to make it back, reporting Hannibal's terms, "but the summer was over before the king could make any active preparations. So effectual was the capture of a single ship and ambassadors in postponing a war which threatened the Romans."⁷²¹ Whether or not Philip had serious intentions of coming into the war at all, his participation ended with nothing more than his embarrassment and no assistance for Carthage. Likewise, when Gen. Lee's wife expressed the hope that Great Britain and the Union would go to war, Lee commented,

"You must not build your hopes on peace on account of the United States going into war with England. She will be very loath to do that, notwithstanding the

⁷¹⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.40.17.

⁷¹⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 24.13.5.

⁷²⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 25.23.8-9 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 161.

⁷²¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.39.4. "sed prius se aestas circumegit quam movere ac moliri quicquam rex posset: tantum navis una capta cum legatis momenti fecit ad dilationem imminentis Romanis belli."

bluster of the Northern papers... We must make up our minds to fight our battles and win our independence, no one will help us.”⁷²²

At the beginning of the Italian campaign season in 213 B.C. Tarentum again informed Hannibal of a pro-Carthaginian party inside the city. Using commando tactics, Hannibal secured the great city, though his success was somewhat nullified by the Roman garrison that still held the citadel. With all the Tarentine ships bottled up in the inner harbour, it looked as if they were trapped since the Roman fleet could reinforce their garrison from the open sea. Hannibal solved this by having the ships brought onto land and then moved through the city on wheels until they reached the outer harbour where they were again launched. The capture of the city and the method of freeing the ships all speak to Hannibal's genius. The year proved favourable to Hannibal even without the assistance of Philip with Brundisium on the Adriatic coast and Rhegium on the Messina Straits the only ports remaining in Roman control below the Bay of Neapolis.⁷²³

The Importance of the War in Spain⁷²⁴

It seems the Carthaginian home government determined early on in the conflict that to lose Spain was by far higher in importance than actually defeating Rome in Italy. They continually supplied resources for the actions in Spain, but their directives were occasional with most of their decisions based on reactions to Roman moves rather than

⁷²² A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 166.

⁷²³ E. Bradford, Hannibal, page 143-144.

⁷²⁴ A good summary of the events in Spain can be found in Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 250-255; E. Bradford, Hannibal, pages 169-175; H.H. Scullard, A History of the Roman World 753 to 146 B.C., 4th Edition, pages 211-214 & 225-229, while a detailed account can be found in B. Caven, The Punic Wars, pages 193-207 and T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, pages 95-118.

concerted objectives of their own.⁷²⁵ While both Hannibal and the Carthaginian senate must have agreed that subjecting Rome to Carthaginian rule was not an option they hoped to pursue, Rome certainly grasped Spain's importance to Carthage as the true reservoir of its military might as well as the strategic location of their greatest city in Spain, Carthago Nova. With the wealth of Spain behind Carthage the treasury flowing into Carthage remained stable.

For these reasons coupled with the influence Hasdrubal held as Hannibal's successor in Spain, not only did Rome not recall their forces in Spain after their disastrous defeat at Cannae, they increased the Roman detachment with twenty additional ships, eight thousand men, and a great quantity of supplies.⁷²⁶ In contrast to Carthage's desire to control Spain, Polybius believes the Roman Senate's decision to reinforce the army sprang from their desire to weaken Hasdrubal's influence and position among the Iberian tribes in hopes he would be unable to recruit reinforcements there for Hannibal.⁷²⁷ Even though Hasdrubal managed to recruit troops in Spain there was disaffection among Carthage's Iberian allies, "...for the majority were Spaniards, who preferred to be vanquished in Spain, rather than as victors to be dragged to Italy."⁷²⁸

After the news of Hannibal's victory at Cannae reached Carthage the senate sent a small reinforcement of soldiers and orders to mount an expedition to join his brother in Italy from the north while they sent another detachment directly to Hannibal in the south

⁷²⁵ A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, page 246.

⁷²⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 3.97.1; Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 22.22.1 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 127.

⁷²⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 3.97.3.

⁷²⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.29.8. "Minus pertinaces viros habebat altera acies; nam maxima pars Hispani erant, qui vinci in Hispania quam victores in Italiam trahi malebant."

of Italy by sea.⁷²⁹ While the Roman predominance at sea off the coast of Spain precluded any reinforcements from reaching Hannibal by sea from Spain, Hasdrubal was convinced he could duplicate Hannibal's march over the Alps. In the spring of 215 he moved north with some thirty thousand troops, half African regulars and half Iberian tribal warriors while Carthage sent Hamilco to Spain to succeed Hasdrubal. To block his march, the Scipio brothers, Gnaeus and P. Cornelius amassed nearly thirty thousand Romans and Italians along with a few auxiliaries at the Ebro. Hasdrubal unsuccessfully attempted a double envelopment similar to that which his brother executed the previous year at Cannae, but the Carthaginian's center broke before his cavalry could overcome their opposition. Consequently, Hanno and Hasdrubal Barca were driven back to the Ebro while Rome assumed command of the sea around the Spanish coast, the Pyrenees, securely severing Spain from Italy. In the wake of their defeat reinforcements intended for Italy the Carthaginian senate diverted to Spain. More importantly for Hannibal, a disproportionate number of Carthaginian resources had been drawn to Spain and another invasion of Italy prevented.

For several years P. Cornelius and Gnaeus Scipio continued to win repeated successes until, caught divided, the two brothers were defeated and killed in the course of a series of battles at the Guadalquivir.⁷³⁰ Only the negligence and incompetence of the Carthaginian commanders kept the shattered remnants of the Roman army from being driven out of Spain. By late autumn of 211 only ten thousand legionnaires held the Ebro line against three Carthaginian armies totaling more than forty-five thousand men.⁷³¹ Additionally, many of the Iberian tribes had forsaken the Romans for Carthage. The

⁷²⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 23.27.

⁷³⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 25.33 & 34.

⁷³¹ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 1320-132.

timing could not have been better to push Rome out of Spain, allowing the Carthaginians the luxury of sending reinforcements to Hannibal.

This was not to be for while the Carthaginian generals quarreled amongst themselves over control, the immensely influential Scipionic faction managed to persuade a majority in the Roman Senate of the necessity to continue the conflict in Spain. As the winter of 210/209 progressed serious disaffection arose against Carthaginian rule as the Carthaginian commanders continued to bicker.⁷³² Because Carthago Nova was almost the only city in Spain with a harbour suitable for a naval force and the fact that it was situated on a direct sea-run to Carthage, made it of utmost strategic value to both Carthage and Rome. Additionally, the Carthaginians kept most of their treasure and war material, as well as hostages from the Spanish tribes in the city. In order to pacify the Iberian tribes, the Carthaginians divided their armies,⁷³³ leaving only one thousand troops to guard Carthago Nova.⁷³⁴ Their separation, and the fact that none resided less than ten days' march from the city left it open to attack by Scipio.⁷³⁵

In a daring action, Scipio led a breaching column through a lagoon on the landward side to capture the city.⁷³⁶ With his subsequent victory Rome had taken the greatest Carthaginian city in Spain, captured an immense treasure, and delivered a great

⁷³² Polybius, The Histories, 10.7.3 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 202.

⁷³³ Polybius, The Histories, 10.7.3 & Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 26.20.6.

⁷³⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 10.7.2-4.

⁷³⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 10.7.5-7; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 202 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 134.

⁷³⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 10.14 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 215.

blow to Carthage. The capture of Carthago Nova marked the beginning of the end for the Carthaginians in Spain.⁷³⁷

With orders to keep Hasdrubal from reaching Italy at all costs, Scipio assaulted the army of Hasdrubal Barca at the Baecula the following year.⁷³⁸ Realizing he had been outmanoeuvred, Hasdrubal immediately withdrew for his goal remained to reach Hannibal with an army from the north. He managed to extricate his treasure, his elephants, and almost two-thirds of his army. And made for the Tagus determined to aid his brother.⁷³⁹ Hasdrubal led his army east along the path taken by Hannibal ten long years previously. After a march conducted with great judgment and little loss through the interior of Gaul and the passes of the Alps, he appeared at the head of his troops, which he had partly brought with him from Spain and partly levied among the Gauls and Ligurians on his way.⁷⁴⁰ By letting Hasdrubal escape Scipio allowed his country to be more exposed to danger than at any time since Hannibal had crossed the Alps.

⁷³⁷ It is interesting to note that Scipio's strategy is very much the same as Hannibal's in Italy. As stated in B. Alexander, How Great Generals Win, page 300, "The Carthaginians in Spain believed Scipio Africanus would strike at their armies and left unguarded their capital and principal port New Carthage. Scipio seized the city in 209 B.C., cut off the main sea connection with Carthage, caused several Spanish tribes to come over to the Romans, and abruptly threw the Carthaginians on the strategic defensive."

⁷³⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 10.39.1; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 250 & Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.18.7.

⁷³⁹ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 142.

⁷⁴⁰ Not all of the events in Spain taken by Scipio are directly related to the topic at hand, so I have used only that information which is pertinent. A good full account of the events can be found in B.H. Liddell Hart, Scipio Africanus, pages 20-105.

Chapter Conclusions

By 211 Hannibal had been fighting in Italy for eight years, though his later campaigns had not been marked by any great victories as evidenced the first years of his invasion. The stern spirit of Roman resolution, ever highest in disaster and danger, had neither bent nor despaired beneath the merciless blows dealt in rapid succession at Trebia, Lake Trasimene, and at Cannae. For Hannibal the whole achievement of Cannae in purely manpower terms, had been negated. All that remained of Cannae was the effect on morale. For in spite of Rome's overwhelming numbers, the Romans dared not simply close in on Hannibal with their massive armies for fear the results would be the same as before. Rome's population thinned through repeated slaughter in the field; nevertheless, the Roman armies fielded in 214 demonstrated that in spite of his victories in the opening phases of the war, Hannibal had so far failed in his strategic object of denying Rome its manpower base.

Poverty and actual scarcity ground down the survivors, through the fearful ravages that Hannibal's cavalry spread through their crops, pasturelands, and vineyards. Livy makes considerable mention of the necessity to find adequate food supplies at this time saying that: Fulvius Flaccus as commander at Capua in 210 exacted grain in lieu of rent for the confiscated lands,⁷⁴¹ that commissioners were sent to buy grain for the garrison at Tarentum, the embassy to Egypt may also have something to do with food supply,⁷⁴² and the Roman Senate decided to use some of the gold reserves kept in the sacred treasury.⁷⁴³ Many of the Roman allies went over the Hannibal's side, and new clouds of foreign war threatened Rome from Macedonia and Gaul. But Rome did not recede. Rich and poor

⁷⁴¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.3.1.

⁷⁴² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.4.10.

⁷⁴³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.10.11-3.

among her citizens vied with each other in devotion to their country. The wealthy placed their wealth, and all placed their lives, at Rome's disposal. And, although Hannibal could not be driven out of Italy, and though every year brought suffering and sacrifices, Rome felt that her constancy had not been exerted in vain. If Rome was weakened by continued strife, so was Hannibal.

With the capture of Capua, the tide began to turn against Carthage. Hannibal was still very much in the field. Though he held parts of Apulia, Samnium and Lucania, along with most of the Greek cities in the south, and all of Bruttium, he had not been able to shake the loyalty of the Latin states or Rome's hardcore allies in the center of the peninsula. Now with Rome's recovered control of most of Sicily, Hannibal had little hope of receiving reinforcements directly from Carthage. One chance remained – if his brothers, Hasdrubal and Mago, could bring or send him help from Spain. However, when the Carthaginian army led by Hasdrubal finally reached Italy from Spain four years later, it came not in victory but as the Carthaginian cause in Spain met disaster.

Hasdrubal commanded the Carthaginian armies in Spain for some time with varying but generally unfavourable fortune. He did not have the full authority over the Carthaginian forces in Iberia, which his brother and father had previously exercised. The Hanno faction in Carthage succeeded in fettering and interfering with his power; and they sent other generals to Spain, whose errors and misconduct caused reversals Hasdrubal had to deal with. In 208 although Hasdrubal out-manoeuvred Scipio, whose objective was to prevent his passing the Pyrenees on a march to Italy, it is clear Scipio's victories awarded Rome control of Spain. Scipio expected Hasdrubal to attempt the nearest route along the coast of the Mediterranean, where he carefully fortified and guarded the passes of the eastern Pyrenees. But Hasdrubal passed these mountains near their western extremity; and then, with a considerable force of Spanish infantry, a small number of African troops,

some elephants and much treasure, he marched – not directly towards the coast of the Mediterranean, but in a northeastern line – towards the center of Gaul. He halted for the winter in the territory of the Arverni, and conciliated or purchased the good will of the Gauls in that region so far that he not only found friendly winter quarters among them, but great numbers of them enlisted under him; and, on the approach of spring, marched with him to invade Italy.

By thus entering Gaul at the southwest, and avoiding its southern maritime districts, Hasdrubal kept the Romans in complete ignorance of his precise operations and movements. All they knew was that Hasdrubal had baffled Scipio's attempts to detain him in Spain, that he had crossed the Pyrenees with soldiers, elephants, and treasure, and that he was raising fresh forces among the Gauls. The spring was sure to bring him into Italy, and then would come the real tempest of the war, when from the north and from the south the two Carthaginian armies, led each by a son of Hamilcar Barca were to combine forces against Rome. If jointly the two brothers could inflict a massive defeat on the Roman armies, Rome would be forced to sue for peace or face the very real threat of a protracted siege with no allies as most, if not all, would be sending troops to Hannibal and not to Rome.

Chapter V

At the onset of winter in 208 B.C. Hannibal must have felt a sense of impending crisis. Either a way had to be found to win the war in Italy within a short time, or all hope of a success on Italian soil must be abandoned and another new strategy formulated. The only reasonable strategy for winning the war within a short time was to reinforce the army on a large scale. His first strategy had included the substitution of a new Italian confederation under the nominal leadership of Capua, dominated by Carthage. With Capua now recaptured by Rome the idea that the Italian allies might view a siege as contrary to his proposed “liberation” no longer applied. With sufficient manpower a long siege was a possibility and such a large army could be split into three groups each with a separate task. One to conduct the siege, another could occupy any Roman armies still afield, and the third could continue to bring new allies into Carthage’s influence, by force or the threat of force.

Hannibal realized Carthage had been less than forthcoming with reinforcements in the past, so he turned to his brother Hasdrubal in Spain. The possibility of troops loaned from Macedonia ended up being a dead letter. There were few other options. His remaining brother Mago, untried in battle and forced to gain troops from a reluctant Carthaginian senate, was unlikely to provide significant support. Knowing Hasdrubal had been instructed by the senate as early as 215 to cross the Alps and join with his army in the north – with Spain all but lost – the time was now or never. If Hasdrubal proved unsuccessful in the task, he must then implement a new plan as quickly as possible. The only remaining option open to him would be a retreat to Carthage, or African territory, to fight a defensive war in the hope that Rome would tire of a foreign war and call off the conflict with reparations, which might not be too harsh. In the end, as will be seen Hannibal was forced to implement this third strategy after Hasdrubal’s death and Scipio’s

invasion of Africa. Peace would be on Roman terms no matter how great his victories might be against Scipio.

Hannibal and Hasdrubal Plan to Combine Their Armies

Livy records a conference between Hasdrubal and his fellow generals, Mago, Masinissa, and Hasdrubal Gisgo, at which they decided he should advance to Italy with an army made up of Spanish troops.⁷⁴⁴ It is interesting to note that in the previous section, *Book 27.19*, Livy indicates Hasdrubal has already made plans to send his elephants on in advance and to get his money together for a hasty departure “before the battle” of Baecula and definitely before the clandestine meeting of the generals.⁷⁴⁵ There is, indeed, the possibility that Hasdrubal had already been in touch with his brother and had decided to make haste to his assistance prior to and without giving battle to Scipio. But for whatever reason whether the Carthaginians’ recent defeat or that many of the Spaniards were individually and collectively going over to the Roman cause, even without official instructions from the Carthaginian government, Hasdrubal left to meet Hannibal “...for Italy was the main theatre of the war and his going there would take all the Spanish troops out of Spain and at the same time far away from the sound of Scipio’s name.”⁷⁴⁶

To continue the protection of Spain, the generals decided Mago should turn over his forces to Hasdrubal Gisgo while Mago went to the Balearic Islands to hire auxiliary troops.⁷⁴⁷ Although most of Livy’s narrative of 207 B.C. is devoted to operations in Italy, he does record minor operations in Spain. He indicates a new general, Hanno, has been sent to replace Hasdrubal Barca, and we must assume the Carthaginian Senate is

⁷⁴⁴ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 27.20.3-8.

⁷⁴⁵ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 27.19.1.

⁷⁴⁶ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 27.20.

⁷⁴⁷ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 27.20.3-8.

responsible for his disposition to Spain.⁷⁴⁸ The fact that neither side forced an important engagement until Ilipa in 206 suggests the Carthaginian policy was to prolong the war in Spain until they could ascertain the outcome of events in Italy. But the most likely reason for the delay is that to the Carthaginian government and to its generals in Spain the previous two years' increased naval activity off the coast of Africa looked like a prelude to an invasion of the homeland.⁷⁴⁹

The dispositions made by Rome in the winter of 208-207 B.C. reflect the added danger perceived from the imminent arrival of Hasdrubal in northern Italy. The Senate appointed Gaius Claudius Nero and Marcius Livius as consuls with Livius to intercept Hasdrubal in the north, while Nero contained Hannibal in the south, "...each of them should keep an enemy in his province, and not allow them to come together and combine their armies in one."⁷⁵⁰ Similar conclusions seem appropriate when we discover the consuls completed the levy of their troops with all possible speed and left for their provinces earlier than intended when word reached Rome that Hasdrubal was already on his way over the Alps. The northern army consisted of two legions with an equal force of Italian allies. The southern army was of the same strength, with each consular army supported by another two. The praetor Lucius Porcius Livinus commanded an army to assist Livius while T. Varro led a second army into Etruria to further subdue the region. Quintus Fulvius Flaccus supported Nero in Bruttium and another army under the command of Gaius Cato remained in Tarentum.⁷⁵¹ In Italy alone fifteen legions,

⁷⁴⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.1-4.4.

⁷⁴⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.29.7-8 & 28.4.7.

⁷⁵⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.39.3. "...uterque hostem in sua provincia contineret neque coniungi aut conferre in unum vires pateretur."

⁷⁵¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.35.

representing 75,000 Roman citizens were under arms, with an equal number of allies available or nearly four times the number Hannibal faced in 218.⁷⁵²

“The setting out of the consuls from the city in opposite directions, as though for two wars at the same time, had drawn men’s anxious thoughts both ways, while they not only remembered what disasters the first coming of Hannibal had brought into Italy... But now that two wars had been admitted into Italy, two generals of the greatest celebrity were circling the city of Rome, and upon one spot the whole mass, the entire weight of the danger had settled. Whichever of them was the first to win a victory would within a few days unite his camp with the other’s.”⁷⁵³

No one expected Hasdrubal – least of all Hannibal – to cross the Rhône and then the Alps as quickly and easily as he did.⁷⁵⁴ Considering the Alps had now been open to twelve years of constant use and the inhabitants had been hearing stories of the war between the two cities for more than eleven years, it is not surprising that Hasdrubal found the trip easier than that experienced by Hannibal.⁷⁵⁵ Partly because of the ease with which Hasdrubal crossed, both Livy and Appian believe he used the same route as his

⁷⁵² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.36.10-13.

⁷⁵³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.40.1 & 6. “Consules diversis itineribus profecti ab urbe velut in duo pariter bella distenderant curas hominum, simul recordantium, quas primus adventus Hannibalis intulisset Italiae clades,... Nunc duo bella in Italiam accepta, duo celeberrimi nominis duces circumstare urbem Romanam, et unum in locum totam periculi molem, omne onus incubuisse. Qui eorum prior vicisset, intra paucos dies castra.”

⁷⁵⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 11.1 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, pages 267-272.

⁷⁵⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.39.

brother.⁷⁵⁶ Once he crossed the Po in 207 he advanced on Placentia, setting siege to the city. Most likely he wished to impress the Celts of the region in hopes of adding to his army. Waiting only long enough to recruit sufficient Gauls and Ligurians before pressing on southward toward Ariminum, Porcius retreated before the mighty Carthaginian forces. Even after Livius arrived with his two legions, the Romans could not resist Hasdrubal's advance. The Romans fell behind the river Metaurus on the coast and camped under the walls of Sena.⁷⁵⁷

The main argument for supposing that Hannibal coordinated his plans with the news of Hasdrubal's arrival can be interpreted from his efforts to break free from the Roman forces in his vicinity. First he set out to augment his numerically inferior force by gathering all his garrisons into one army. Assuming he would have to go north to meet Hasdrubal, he was well aware of the advantage to the Carthaginian cause and the destabilization their combined victory in central Italy or Umbria would wreak on Rome. He must have weighed the risks posed by leaving Bruttium defenseless even for a few months – the possible loss of Bruttium, if not all, at least the seaports of Locri and Crotona. These ports were essential if he hoped to receive aid from Carthage, maintain links with the Macedonians, and, as a last resort, to re-embark for Africa with his men. From Livy's account we know he took the time to assemble the detachments scattered in the various garrisons in Calabria and marched his army into Lucania.⁷⁵⁸

In two subsequent engagements with Nero, Hannibal reportedly suffered more losses than his adversary; however, as stated earlier it was Roman tradition to magnify enemy losses. Hannibal not only gave Nero the slip under cover of night, he reached

⁷⁵⁶ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.39.4ff & Appian, Hannibalic War, 52.

⁷⁵⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.46.6 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 184.

⁷⁵⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.41.1.

Metapontum, adding its garrison to his troops. Next he ordered his lieutenant and nephew, Hanno, the commander of Metapontum, to form another army in Bruttium. Hannibal's ensuing movements described by Livy, from Apulia into Lucania, back into Apulia and from there into Bruttium show an uncanny sense of movement used to baffle Nero's pursuit and further hold off Rome's attacks until he amassed sufficient forces for the march north.⁷⁵⁹ If we view the events from Hannibal's perspective, upon closer examination his devices become obvious. No effort to conceal all traces of such a large army's movement is possible; by doubling back on his tracks, his actual movements would become obscured and confusing to Nero's pursuing army. Nevertheless, Nero dogged his footsteps, while summoning the pro-consul Fulvius Flaccus from Capua into Lucania to join forces: in total 40,000 foot soldiers and 2,500 cavalry.⁷⁶⁰ With his army increased Hannibal returned to Venusia where he took up a position at Canusium in Apulia to await news from Hasdrubal.⁷⁶¹ It is at this point according to Livy that the Romans intercepted Hasdrubal's message to Hannibal.⁷⁶²

The Plan Discovered

With little to no access for communication with Hannibal, Hasdrubal sent a written dispatch, which outlined his planned southeastwards march to combine their forces "in Umbria".⁷⁶³ Sending six messengers south – four Gaulish and two Numidian horsemen – they traveled at night careful to avoid any area where the Romans were known to be concentrated. The messengers crossed nearly the entire length of the Italian

⁷⁵⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.41-42 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 207.

⁷⁶⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.40.14 & 7.42.15-7.

⁷⁶¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.42.15-17.

⁷⁶² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.43.1.

⁷⁶³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.43.8.

peninsula before their safe arrival in Apulia, only to find Hannibal had moved on to Bruttium. As they attempted to follow him, foragers from the army of Quintus Claudius Flamen quite fortuitously captured the six near Roman-held Tarentum. Forced to speak under threat of torture, the message was turned over the Claudius Nero, who read the letter through an interpreter.⁷⁶⁴ It is important to note that Hasdrubal's intentions must remain uncertain for tragedy began to unfold for Carthage from this point. Though Hannibal had received no word from his brother, Hasdrubal in turn had no idea the march north to meet him had not begun. Nero forwarded the captured document on to the Senate along with a plan of action to crush Hasdrubal at the Metaurus river before Hannibal had the opportunity to know where to find his brother's Carthaginian army.⁷⁶⁵

If we again build on the historic text offered from the War Between the States, we can further evaluate how captured documents might damage a well-intended plan. Lee's Special Order 191 provides a kind of detail not available from the 2nd Roman War and yet the outcome is consistently analogous. In another of Robert E. Lee's astoundingly bold moves, on 5 September 1862 Lee led his Army of Northern Virginia across the Potomac into Maryland with an invasion force of 60,000 men. Lee understood only too well that the South could not win a long war of attrition. The North, with far more men, money, and supplies, would surely prevail if the struggle went on long enough. Just as Hannibal knew he needed to win over the Italian allies, Lee saw that the best hope for the South was to win over the border states – of which Maryland was the most important – gain international credibility, and in the process, destroy the North's will to continue the fight.

Then something inconceivable happened. After Lee drew up Special Order 191, detailing his plan for opening the invasion of the North, he distributed copies of the

⁷⁶⁴ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.43 & N.J.E. Austin and N.B. Rankov, Exploratio, page 35.

⁷⁶⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.43 & S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 147.

document to his chief generals, including General Daniel Harvey Hill. On September 13th Union troops occupied the campground Hill had just vacated. There, Union Private W.B. Mitchell, of the 27th Indiana Regiment, found the discarded document wrapped around a packet of cigars. Realizing he had found something of importance, Mitchell passed the papers to his superiors, who sent it to Union general George McClellan. An officer on McClellan's staff recognized the handwriting of Lee's assistant adjutant general, which convinced McClellan the note was genuine.⁷⁶⁶ Obviously, Nero considered the letter carried from Hasdrubal to Hannibal as genuine as well for he sent Hasdrubal's letter to Rome with a dispatch, which revealed his own intentions.⁷⁶⁷

Here too emerges the Roman plan of action: if Hannibal could be contained in the south while a concentration of troops was brought to bear on Hasdrubal, Rome might defeat each brother separately. Speed became the essential element in the plan and Claudius Nero executed a manoeuvre Hannibal-like in skill and audacity. Nero advised the Senate to call forth all Romans who could bear arms and move the two home legions forward to defend the narrow gorge of the Flaminian road at a strategic point between Sabinum and Umbria.⁷⁶⁸ Having arranged for provisioning along his route, Nero chose 7,000 men, including 1,000 cavalry; then leaving his lieutenant Quintus Cadius to guard his camp with the bulk of his army – approximately 30,000 men – he marched with the 7,000 to join his co-consul Marcus Livius. The life or death of the Republic depended on the stealth and speed of the march. Day and night they moved north until in seven days they arrived to join Livius' army under cover of darkness. We might put it this way, even if Hannibal had gotten wind of Nero's manoeuvre, with the force left under Cadius he

⁷⁶⁶ B. Catton, The Civil War, page 95.

⁷⁶⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.43.8ff.

⁷⁶⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.43.8-9.

lacked the capability to hurriedly follow in pursuit. Although McClellan saw that Lee's plan was a hazardous one – to split his forces in two, with Jackson heading towards Harpers Ferry and Longstreet towards Hagerstown – he now held the key that would change the course of American history. With Lee's army split, McClellan was closer to the two than they were to each other. Provided he could move fast he might destroy one force then the other – the crux of Claudius Nero's plan.

The Battle of Metaurus⁷⁶⁹

The idea that Hasdrubal “was not unwilling”⁷⁷⁰ to accept the challenge offered by Porcius and Licinus brings up the question as to why he did not make every effort to avoid battle and continue his march south. Could it be he imagined he held the advantage with his enhanced numbers, the ease with which he had forced Lucinus and Porcius back to the river Metaurus, and the added confidence Hannibal would surely have received his message? Even if all of these aspects are true the most compelling argument is the psychological concept of pride. Trying to duplicate his brother's earlier success, he not only crossed the Alps with considerably less difficulty, he immediately set siege to Placentia in order to, like Hannibal, win support from the Celts before he proceeded. His recent losses in Spain further suggests he may have felt compelled to accept a pitched battle early on just as Hannibal had in his three resounding early victories in order to re-establish his authority.

⁷⁶⁹ For more on the battle of the Metaurus, see Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 264-268; L. Cottrell, Hannibal, pages 196-207; T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 546-560 & H.H. Scullard, A History of the Roman World 753 to 146 B.C., 4th Edition, pages 229-232.

⁷⁷⁰ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 27.47.1ff.

Livy indicates upon noticing the enemy's numbers seemed greater than they had the day before, Hasdrubal had the recall sounded immediately.⁷⁷¹ Additionally, his scouts reported that the trumpets had sounded twice that morning at the consul's tent. Anxiety ridden that one consul had gotten away from Hannibal and that he faced both consuls, Hasdrubal made the crucial decision to break away, intending to re-cross the Metaurus by night with his army.⁷⁷² "Least of all could he suspect the fact... Surely he had been deterred by no common disaster and had not dared pursuit. Hasdrubal greatly feared that after all that the Romans would have the same good fortune in Italy as in Spain."⁷⁷³ Because Hannibal might have already realized the missing Roman troops in the south, Nero insisted Livius and Porcius offer battle immediately.⁷⁷⁴ Deprived of his guides who had fled, pursued by the Roman army, Hasdrubal was forced to give battle, his back to the Metaurus in the worst possible conditions.⁷⁷⁵

Hasdrubal deployed his army to take as much advantage as possible of the local terrain: his left wing rested on the river Metaurus along a stretch too deep to cross; he formed the Gauls along a ravine, covering their front; he placed the Ligurians in the center with his best troops; and he personally led the right wing of Spanish soldiers. His elephants were placed in front of the Ligurians and Iberians. What seems clearly missing is the position of his cavalry – no account of their placement is available. Livius faced

⁷⁷¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.47.1ff & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 187.

⁷⁷² Polybius, The Histories, 11.1-3 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, pages 267-274.

⁷⁷³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.47.6 & 7. "Minime id quod erat suspicari poterat,... profecto haud mediocri clade absteritum insequi non ausum; magno opere vereri ne perditis rebus serum ipse auxilium venisset Romanisque eadem iam fortuna in Italia quae in Hispania esset."

⁷⁷⁴ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.46 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 207.

⁷⁷⁵ S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 148.

him with about the same number of men, plus Nero with his 7,000. Livius deployed his legions opposite the Ligurians and Spanish; Nero positioned facing the Gauls.

Hasdrubal attacked with his elephants, followed by his right wing and center. The ensuing battle was hard fought and hung in the balance. Nero, finding he could not get at the Gauls because of the ravine, took 2,000 infantry and marched them across the Roman rear to fall on the Spanish flank. With Hasdrubal's Spaniards and Ligurians now encircled, the battle was decided. Realizing all was lost, Hasdrubal spurred his horse into the Roman lines, sword in hand, he died. Polybius states,

“But Hasdrubal, as long as there was a reasonable hope of his being able to accomplish something worthy of his past, was more careful of nothing in action than of his own safety, but when fortune had robbed him of the last shred of hope and forced him to face the last extremity, though he neglected nothing in his preparations for the struggle or in the battle itself that might contribute to victory, nevertheless he took thought how if he met with total defeat he might confront that contingency and suffer nothing unworthy of his past.”⁷⁷⁶

The Carthaginian dead amounted to 57,000, the prisoners to 5,400. This number may be inflated for propaganda purposes to compare it with the losses of Rome at Cannae. Never in one day had so many Carthaginians been killed in a single action.⁷⁷⁷ As

⁷⁷⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 11.2.9-10.

“Ἀσδρουβας δ', εως μεν ην ελπις εκ των κατα λογον του δυνασθαι πραττειν αξιον τι των προβεβιωμενων, ουδενος μαλλον προενοειτο κατα τους κινδυνους ως της αυτου σωτηριας· επει δε πασας αφελομενη τας εις το μελλον ελπιδας η τυχη συνεκλεισε προς τον εσχατον καιρον, ουδεν παραλιπων ουτε περι την παρασκευην ουτε κατα τον κινδυνον προς το νικαν,...”

⁷⁷⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.49. Polybius, The Histories, 11.3.3 puts the Carthaginian and Gauls at 10,000 killed in the battle & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, pages 273-274.

well, American historians call the battle of Antietam Creek “the single bloodiest day of the war.”⁷⁷⁸ Union casualties numbered 12,000 while Confederate losses were close to 14,000. Hasdrubal had proven himself on many battlefields and was worth far more to the Carthaginian cause alive. But for whatever reason, whether it was despair from the overwhelming defeat, or the assumption that Hannibal lay dead in the south of Italy Hasdrubal “...having done all that a good general should, fell in the thick of the fight.”⁷⁷⁹

Thus the ancient sources give us the impression that before Hannibal realized the Roman troops had gone, Nero returned south to face him. Evidence further suggests he learned of Hasdrubal’s defeat only when Nero had his severed head thrown into the Carthaginian camp. Seeing African soldiers in chains, the consul allowed two of the Numidians to cross the lines to bring news of the disaster. “Hannibal, under the blow of so great a sorrow, at once public and intimate, is reported to have said that he recognized the destiny of Carthage.”⁷⁸⁰ The loss of Stonewall Jackson produced a comparable response in Lee.

Returning to his own lines in preparation for launching a night attack, Confederate pickets mistook General Jackson and his party for Union cavalry. Jackson’s wounds forced the surgeons to amputate his right arm. Although the Confederates drove the Union troops from their positions the next day at Chancellorsville, they failed to win a decisive victory. After the battle, Lee sent Jackson the following message: “Could I have directed events, I would have chosen for the good of the country to have been disabled in

⁷⁷⁸ B. Catton, The Civil War, page 95.

⁷⁷⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 11.2.

⁷⁸⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.51.12. “Hannibal, tantio simul publico familiarique ictus luctu, agnoscere se fortunam Carthaginiis fertur dixisse:...”

your stead. I congratulate you upon the victory, which is due to your skill and energy.”⁷⁸¹

While recuperating Jackson contracted pneumonia and died. The day after his death, Lee wrote his son, Custis, “I have lost my right arm...it is a terrible loss. I do not know how to replace him.”⁷⁸² Even though no person is irreplaceable, the sudden an unexpected loss of a key player and close relationship proved a devastating blow to both Hannibal and Lee.

The vulgarity of Nero’s gesture shows more thoroughly than the barbarity of the act. Hannibal’s respectful treatment of the bodies of Aemilius and Marcellus attest to the fact that he would never have done such a deed. After Cannae, as after the battle of Trasimene, Hannibal sought among the slain bodies of his distinguished opponents and gave ceremonial burial with military honours to Lucius Aemilius Paullus and others. Likewise, as soon as Hannibal learned of Marcellus’ death, he himself rode the woods until he found the body and had it cremated with due honours to be sent in a silver urn to the dead man’s son. Hannibal had respected Marcellus as an opponent, and as was his custom with fallen opponents, he paid him the marks of respect due to a man worthy of honour.⁷⁸³

We might put it this way, the battle of Metaurus halted any Carthaginian attempt to defeat the Romans in their homeland just as clearly as Hasdrubal’s severed head signaled Hannibal had lost the initiative for the first time in twelve years. The temptation to return to Carthage must have been nearly irresistible. In one complicated instance he at least showed that the blow had struck home. He gathered all his men, including the Metapontum garrison and took refuge in the extreme tip of Bruttium where he still

⁷⁸¹ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 255.

⁷⁸² A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 255.

⁷⁸³ E. Bradford, Hannibal, page 179.

retained the two small seaports of Croton and Locri.⁷⁸⁴ It is possible that Hannibal's sole concern may have been the safety of his men because at this stage in the war manpower must have been far more important than the retention of hostile towns. The apparent problem that Spain would soon pass out of Carthaginian control indicates the next action by Rome would be an invasion of the Carthaginian homeland. Thus Hannibal must have already anticipated the need for him to bring as many seasoned soldiers with him in case of a recall to Carthage.

Through our examination of the battle of Antietam we find the confrontation tactically a draw; however, strategically, just as Metaurus was to Rome, it was a Union victory of unsurpassed importance. The Southern invasion failed, the North regained the initiative, and European statesmen failed to recognize the Confederacy.⁷⁸⁵ Hasdrubal's northern invasion of Rome ended in total collapse, creating an advantage never before achieved by Rome. Yet even though McClellan drove Lee out of Maryland, he missed the opportunity to destroy the Army of Northern Virginia and, possibly, end the war. Nero's failure to bring Hannibal to battle created the same missed opportunity for Rome to destroy the Carthaginian army on the Roman home ground. When McClellan allowed Lee to escape with what remained of his army, the Maryland campaign had failed – the war would go on. And go on it did for Rome. Although for another two years Hannibal was never beaten in a pitched battle on Italian soil, from 207 onward, Hannibal's guiding principle must have been not merely how to preserve his army, but how to preserve Carthage itself. If Rome mounted a significant invasion of Africa, forces in Italy might be so weakened that he could again be a threat. For a short time to retain this small patch of

⁷⁸⁴ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 27.51; S. Lancel, Hannibal, page 149 & E. Bradford, Hannibal, pages 193-194.

⁷⁸⁵ B. Catton, The Civil War, page 96.

territory in Italy seemed the best way for Hannibal to protect Carthage. Ultimately, the situation was a standoff neither side could afford to maintain.

Carthage Sends Reinforcements

At the beginning of the spring 206 B.C., Rome assigned the two new consuls to Bruttium; however, after being ambushed by Carthaginian troops, they withdrew to Lucania. Livy asserts,

“With Hannibal there was no campaigning that year. For neither did he invite attack, owing to his very recent wound, a blow national as well as personal, nor did the Romans provoke him so long as he remained inactive; such power they believed to be present in that one commander, even though everything else around him crashed.”⁷⁸⁶

The epidemics raging in the camps of the Romans and Carthaginians in Bruttium further prevented Hannibal from undertaking any special operations.⁷⁸⁷ He continued to wait; conducting a defensive posture, again hoping his brother Mago might have better fortune than Hasdrubal. He continued to base his hopes on Mago’s arrival, patiently holding his ground, eager to seize any opportunity to join forces and once more become active offensively.

In the autumn of 206, with no hope for Carthage to retain its presence in Spain, Mago prepared to withdraw to Africa. Before his departure Livy states he received orders from Carthage to take his fleet to northern Italy and recruit as many Gauls and Ligurians

⁷⁸⁶ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.12.1. “Cum Hannibale nihil eo anno rei gestum est. Nam neque ipse se obtulit in tqam recenti volnere publico privatoque neque laccessierunt quietum Romani: tantam inesse vim, etsi omnia alia circa eum ruerent, in uno illo duce censebant.”

⁷⁸⁷ T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, page 577-578.

as possible and then to try to join Hannibal.⁷⁸⁸ At this time the Carthaginians persisted in the chance that Mago's arrival in the Po Valley in concert with Hannibal's continued presence in Bruttium Rome might be swayed into a peaceful settlement. After an unsuccessful raid on Carthago Nova, Mago augmented the funds sent by the senate with a ransom from the inhabitants of Gades and set sail for Ibiza, a Carthaginian territory.⁷⁸⁹ From there he pushed on to Majorca, retreating to Minorca to spend the winter.⁷⁹⁰ In the spring of 205 Mago, along with thirty warships and a transport fleet carrying 12,000 foot soldiers and 2,000 horsemen, made the journey from Minorca to the Ligurian coast without a break – a nautical feat in antiquity.⁷⁹¹ He took Genoa without difficulty. After reaching an agreement with the Ligurian Inguani, Mago stored his treasure securely in Savona and sent all but twelve of his ships back to Carthage. During the summer of 205 Mago received reinforcements from Carthage,⁷⁹² as well as additional troops from among the Ligurians and the Gauls of the Po Valley. Here too in 205 emerges an incident where Livy says some eighty Carthaginian merchant ships were captured off Sardinia, and according to his source, Coelius Antipater, they were carrying supplies to Hannibal.⁷⁹³ Even if the fleet was really on its way to Mago,⁷⁹⁴ if accurate, the Carthaginian policy makers had finally begun to focus their attention on Italian mainland.

To bar Mago's access into central Italy, the Roman Senate effected large-scale troop movements, blocking both sides of the Apennines. Although our sources indicate

⁷⁸⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.36.1-2; E. Bradford, Hannibal, page 200.

⁷⁸⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.36.3.

⁷⁹⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.36-7.

⁷⁹¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 29.5.2,

⁷⁹² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 29.1.14.

⁷⁹³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.46.14.

⁷⁹⁴ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 196.

most of Etruria was ready to go over to him,⁷⁹⁵ he waited almost the two years, until the summer of 203, before launching a move against the Roman legions near Milan. The battle, which soon went against the Carthaginians, turned into a rout when Mago fell from his horse with a lance through his thigh. Even though critically injured he was able to retreat to the Ligurian coast where ships awaited him with a message from the Carthaginian senate to return at once to Carthage. Possibly some of his ships did reach the African coast, however, Mago died at sea off the coast of Sardinia.⁷⁹⁶

Although it is unclear whether Hannibal had heard of his brother's successful landing in Liguria, it would have mattered little except as moral support, for his diminished forces were subjected to a tight blockade in Bruttium by at least 40,000 men. The chance of combining his army with Mago's forces, even if Mago had been able to defeat the four legions blocking his entry, would have been even more difficult than the earlier task of joining Hasdrubal. He was literally cut off from any help.

The Roman Invasion of Africa⁷⁹⁷

On a broader scale we must examine the political climate in Africa to understand the situation Carthage now faced. In the third century B.C., with the exception of Carthage, three kingdoms shared North Africa: the kingdoms of Massyli, Masaesyli, and Mauri. Baga ruled the Mauri (modern Morocco), the largest of the kingdoms was

⁷⁹⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 29.36.10-12.

⁷⁹⁶ S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 154-155 & T. A. Dodge, Hannibal, page 571.

⁷⁹⁷ For more on the invasion of Africa, see N. Bagnall, The Punic Wars, pages 267-285; G.P. Baker, Hannibal, pages 248-268; Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 280-285; B. Caven, The Punic Wars, pages 230-248; T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 561-595; T.A. Dorey and D.R. Dudley, Rome Against Carthage, pages 134-143; A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, pages 286-300; S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 160-168; J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 193-216 & H.H. Scullard, A History of the Roman World 753 to 146 B.C., 4th Edition, pages 232-236.

Masesyli, covering half of modern Algeria, ruled by Syphax, while Gaia controlled the southern territory of Massyli all the way to the Tunisian coast of Gabes down to the lesser Syrtis.

These indigenous Numidian princes did not remain passive spectators in the struggle between Rome and Carthage. Both the Romans and the Carthaginians realized their importance and aggressively courted each. Siding with one or the other, they alternated their loyalties. Gaia supplied Carthage with troops sent to Spain under his son Masinissa, who fought alongside the Carthaginians between 212 and 206. Nevertheless, after 206 Masinissa contributed to the Carthaginian downfall in Spain. Only in Spain did the year 206 see a decisive battle, Ilipa, and the final withdrawal of Carthaginian forces there. Sensing a change in the balance of power after the crushing defeat suffered by the Carthaginian army at Ilipa, Masinissa sought an interview with Scipio in 206, offering his support to the Roman general if Rome should bring the war to Africa. Scipio, realizing the value of the Massylian cavalry, and fearing the possibility of engaging combat with an army that was vastly superior in number on its home ground, accepted.⁷⁹⁸

For several years Syphax had been courting the Roman's favour, thinking they would help free him from Carthage's yoke; however, in 206 Syphax was still committed to the Carthaginian alliance. In the summer of 206 Scipio crossed from Carthago Nova to Siga for a visit with Syphax. By chance Hasdrubal Gisco, embarking at Gades to return to Carthage made landfall at Siga at the same time as Scipio. Syphax urged both sides to enjoy his hospitality. Syphax and Scipio concluded a treaty with Scipio believing he had won the Numidian king's alliance, but he was wrong. Hasdrubal Gisco managed to

⁷⁹⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.35 & Polybius, The Histories, 14.1.3.

reclaim Syphax's loyalty to the Carthaginian cause by giving him his daughter, Sophonisba, in marriage, plus Syphax was not anxious to have Carthage as an enemy.⁷⁹⁹

At this time two factions in Rome had opposing ideas of how to continue the fight against Hannibal. Scipio proposed that he carry the war to Africa, while Fabius, ridiculed Scipio's plan. Fabius held the doctrine that the enemy's main army should be the primary objective; there should be no assault on Carthage in Africa as long as Hannibal remained in Italy. Instead, Scipio should bring the small army of Hannibal in Bruttium into battle and defeat him directly. Scipio, not unlike Sherman, saw beyond Hannibal's army, stating the main deterrent to peace was the will of the enemy to continue. An expedition to Africa, as Sherman's later march through South Carolina, might break this will and achieve a Roman victory. Further, if the result were not a victory, but merely a threat to Carthage, the Carthaginian senate would surely recall Hannibal to Africa, which would involve no further loss in Italy.⁸⁰⁰ The Senate ultimately gave his proposal a lukewarm assent, and at the end of the year 206/205, Rome elected Scipio consul along with P. Licinius Crassus.⁸⁰¹

By declaring Sicily a consular province Rome set in motion the first step towards the invasion of Africa. The Roman Senate awarded Scipio proconsulship of Sicily, with permission to cross to Africa if he judged it to be in the best interest of Rome.⁸⁰² As discussed in Chapter III by awarding Scipio proconsulship of an area in need of a strong military presence, the senate allowed Scipio as proconsul to continue his preparations for an attack on Africa. Scipio saw an urgent need to build a strong cavalry force to counter

⁷⁹⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.18.9.

⁸⁰⁰ B. Alexander, How Great Generals Win, pages 57-58.

⁸⁰¹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.38.6.

⁸⁰² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 28.45.1-8.

what he realized to be Hannibal's decisive weapon in battle. Hannibal's use of cavalry shows a striking ability to use his highly-trained forces to make the best use of its different components – the lighter Numidians to screen an advance at Tarentum,⁸⁰³ as a provoking influence at Trebia,⁸⁰⁴ as a holding force at Cannae,⁸⁰⁵ while the heavier, Celtic and Spanish cavalry delivered the final blow against Rome at Cannae.⁸⁰⁶ Following Hannibal's example, Scipio set out to build up the Roman cavalry.⁸⁰⁷ Meanwhile Hasdrubal insisted Syphax send a delegation to inform the Roman consul that he would find himself confronting Syphax as well as Carthage if he pursued his plan of landing in Africa.⁸⁰⁸ The Romans knew that a war could not be waged on Carthaginian territory with any likelihood of success without the reliance on the neutrality, or better still alliance of the native princes; therefore, it became essential that Scipio should hurry his preparations for the African campaign.

During the summer of 204 a Roman invasion force of 30,000 men led by Scipio disembarked on African shores near Utica, twenty miles northwest of Carthage, and set siege to the city. In response by late spring 203, Hasdrubal Gisgo assembled 30,000 Carthaginian infantry and 3,000 cavalry while Syphax arrived with 50,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 horsemen. Feigning fear, Scipio prevented his army from being overwhelmed and entered into negotiations to evacuate Africa in return for Hannibal's evacuation of Italy. However, his purpose was not to retreat, but to prepare for attack. Determining

⁸⁰³ Polybius, The Histories, 8.26.4 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 104.

⁸⁰⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 3.71.10.

⁸⁰⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 3.112.3-4.

⁸⁰⁶ J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 256.

⁸⁰⁷ B. Alexander, How Great Generals Win, page 58.

⁸⁰⁸ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 29.23.

Syphax's camp the more vulnerable of the two, Scipio set fire to the flammable material of the huts encircling the camp. Soon the whole camp was ablaze. The Numidians and the Carthaginians assumed the fires were accidental and rushed out unarmed, only to be massacred by the Romans as they attempted to flee. Hasdrubal and Syphax managed to flee with only 2,000 infantry and 500 cavalry.⁸⁰⁹ Much earlier in Lee's career a comparable situation took place while fighting in Mexico.

After the American victories at Contreras and Churubusco, the Mexicans requested an armistice. Gen. Scott agreed, and hostilities ceased on 24 August 1847. The purpose of the armistice was to give the American and Mexican negotiators the opportunity to conclude the peace treaty; however, by September 7th it was clear that Scott had been deceived. Instead of negotiating in good faith, the Mexicans had used the opportunity to regroup and strengthen their defenses guarding the approaches to Mexico City.⁸¹⁰ Many times throughout history we can see a ceasefire used as a manipulative tactic and each time it seems to take the agreeing faction by surprise.

Scipio immediately struck the new enemy army before they could reorganize. Five days' march from Utica in the middle valley of the Medjerda Scipio met Hasdrubal Gisgo and Syphax once again. Of his two legions, he placed his cavalry on the right, Masinissa and his Massaesylians on the left. The Carthaginian forces were cut to an inadequately trained army of 35,000, plus an additional 4,000 Celtiberians recruited in Spain by Hasdrubal, which sustained the brunt of the battle. Hasdrubal fled to Carthage and Syphax took advantage of their resistance to retreat to his capital Cirta. In Carthage's senate, the consequences of the defeat were immediately apparent: after Utica it would bring the city of Carthage into the front line. The frightened Carthaginian senate

⁸⁰⁹ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30.5-7 & B. Alexander, How Great Generals Win, page 60.

⁸¹⁰ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 65.

frantically made a decision to recall Hannibal from Italy without further delay, while also ordering Mago to return with his Gaulish recruits.⁸¹¹ Upon hearing the envoys pleas, Hannibal exclaimed in frustration:

“ ‘It is no longer obscurely but openly that I am being recalled by men who, in forbidding the sending of reinforcements and money, were long ago trying to drag me back. The conqueror of Hannibal is therefore not the Roman people, so often cut to pieces and put to flight, but the Carthaginian senate by carping and envy. And over this inglorious return of mine it will not be Publius Scipio who wildly exults, so much as Hanno, who, unable to do so by any other means, has ruined our family by the downfall of Carthage.’”⁸¹²

Carthage Reacts to the Invasion and Hannibal Implements His Third Strategy⁸¹³

During the summer of 203, thirty Carthaginian senators traveled to Scipio. After prostrating themselves before him, they acknowledged the wrongs done to Rome by Carthage and laid the entire responsibility for the war upon Hannibal and his clan.⁸¹⁴ They finished by appealing to the generosity of their victor.

⁸¹¹ Polybius, The Histories, 14.5.15; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 430 & B. Alexander, How Great Generals Win, page 62.

⁸¹² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30.20.2-4. “ ‘Iam non perplexe’ inquit, ‘sed palam revocant qui vetando supplementum et pecuniam mitti iam pridem retrahebant. Vicit ergo Hannibalem non populus Romanus totiens caesus fugatusque, sed senatus Carthaginiensis obtrectatione atque invidia. Neque hac deformitate reditus mei tam P. Scipio exsultabit atque efferet sese quam Hanno, qui domum nostram, quando alia re non potuit, ruina Carthaginis oppressit.’”

⁸¹³ For more on the Carthaginians reaction to the Roman invasion, see N. Bagnall, The Punic Wars, pages 286-289.

⁸¹⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 15.1.6-7 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, pages 442 & 443.

“When they reached the Roman camp and headquarters they fell to the ground after the custom of courtiers, having derived that ceremony, I suppose, from the region from which they sprang. Such humble obeisance was matched by their discourse, as they did not try to clear themselves of blame, but shifted the original blame to Hannibal and to those who supported his power. They craved pardon for a state now twice overthrown by the rashness of its citizens, to be saved a second time by the favour of its foes.”⁸¹⁵

Later in the autumn of 203 a Carthaginian delegation arrived in Rome with the task of arranging a treaty clearing Carthage of all responsibility for the conflict, stating that their mission was purely and simply to ask for a return to the conditions of the peace treaty concluded in 241.⁸¹⁶ Although the ancient historians agree Hannibal was blamed for the war rather than the Carthaginian people, they are not in concurrence regarding whether or not the treaty had been ratified.⁸¹⁷ The Roman Senate first rejected any discussion of a treaty as long as the Carthaginians still had armies on Italian soil, but after the departure of Mago and Hannibal, the conditions set by Scipio were adopted. The Roman Senate and people probably ratified the treaty on the terms laid down by Scipio

⁸¹⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30.16.4-6. “Qui ubi in castra Romana et in praetorium pervenerunt, more adulantium – accepto, credo, ritu ex ea regione ex qua oriundi erant – procubuerunt. Conveniens oratio tam humili adulationi fuit, non culpam purgantium, sed transferentium initium culpaе in Hannibalem potentiaеque eius fautores. Veniam civitati petebant civium temeritate bis iam eversae, incolumi futurae iterum hostium beneficio:...”

⁸¹⁶ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30.22.6.

⁸¹⁷ Cassius Dio, Roman History, Vol. I, trans. E. Cary, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1914), 17.74 & Polybius, The Histories, 15.1.3-4.

during the winter of 203-202 B.C.⁸¹⁸ Historians are not in agreement regarding whether or not the treaty had been ratified.⁸¹⁹

It is impossible to reconcile these conflicting accounts, but we should be satisfied that the negotiations allowed Hannibal the time necessary to return from Italy and, hopefully, reverse the current situation in Africa. The idea being any truce and/or treaty allowed Hannibal the time necessary to arrange the disposition of his troops and their trip to Africa. Both Livy and Appian report claims of Hannibal butchering his Italian troops, horses, and pack-animals to be left behind, this would have been unusual for when he landed in 202 he must have had at least 12,000 troops if we examine the numbers at Zama.⁸²⁰ Once he landed some hundred miles southeast of Carthage at Hadrumentum, the Carthaginians regained their confidence and broke off negotiations; though we see his mistrust of the Carthaginian senate led him to remain some distance from the city. Even if the delegation to Rome merely tried to delay the treaty long enough for his return, Hannibal certainly knew they had tried lay the blame for the war solely on him. In order to keep his distance from the Carthaginian government he took up winter quarters at Byzacena, which allowed him to put enough space between his forces and Scipio's army yet maintain freedom to manoeuvre. Remaining on his own properties, assured his personal safety while he continued to obtain reinforcements and supplies. He made provisions of wheat, bought horses, and turned to Syphax's Numidian relative, Tychaeus,

⁸¹⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 15.1.3 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 442.

⁸¹⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 15.1.3-4 & Cassius Dio, Roman History, 17.74.

⁸²⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30.20.5-6; Appian, Hannibalic War, 58-9 & J. F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 214-215.

for assistance.⁸²¹ Although Mago died during the voyage to Carthage, his army of 12,000 joined Hannibal, along with 2,000 cavalry from the still-loyal Tychaeus, and 4,000 Macedonians sent by Philip V.⁸²²

By the time the Carthaginian envoys, accompanied by a Roman delegation, returned to Carthage to witness the countersigning of the peace treaty by Scipio and the Carthaginian senate, they found themselves once again at war. A fortuitous incident for Carthage occurred when two hundred Roman transports escorted by thirty warships encountered a storm. Blown off course they entered Carthaginian territorial waters where the crews abandoned the transports. Subsequently those senators remaining in Carthage decided Hasdrubal Gisgo should salvage as many vessels as possible, along with the supplies contained onboard. The Roman ships were then towed to Carthage, where they were retained as captured war materials.⁸²³

Fate had given Carthage the supplies they so desperately needed due to the shortages inflicted by the Roman army's presence. Scipio sent three envoys to remonstrate the Carthaginians, but the envoys' words only enflamed them. The majority saw no reason to surrender the windfall of ships and supplies; moreover, treaty obligations notwithstanding, Hannibal's return now opened the way for the restoration of their fortunes.

Despite the threat Scipio posed, or possibly swayed by the excitement of Hannibal's return, the Carthaginians plotted the destruction of the envoys on their return trip. They attacked the Roman quinquereme in which they were traveling and although

⁸²¹ Polybius, The Histories, 15.3.5 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 444.

⁸²² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30. 26.

⁸²³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30.24.

severely damaged the ship escaped with the envoys.⁸²⁴ Whether as a desire for revenge or as a message to the Carthaginian government, Scipio no longer accepted the submission of those cities offering to surrender, but took each by storm, laid the territory to waste, and reduced their inhabitants to slavery. For the council and the city, Rome's actions brought new and devastating consequences since this devastation was the first that had been unchecked. The loss of the tribute-paying cities and townships, which for centuries had maintained the great mercantile city, and the destruction of the fertile land, upon which Carthage depended for its grain and other food, was more than they could bear.

At Hadrumentum, Hannibal received a delegation with orders from Carthage to march and challenge Scipio before it was too late. Hannibal marched west in the direction of Zama, and at once recognized the need to bring Scipio into battle before Masinissa had time to arrive⁸²⁵ He sought a meeting with Scipio and two days later the two commanders rode out from the ranks of their armies, each accompanied by an interpreter and escorted by twelve horsemen. Both Polybius and Livy provide us with an idea of what took place at the meeting, but no record was kept of the encounter. Nevertheless, in the version by Polybius Hannibal broke the silence first, stating:

“ ‘Would that neither the Romans had ever coveted any possessions outside Italy, nor the Carthaginians any outside Africa; for both these were very fine empires and empires of which it might be said on the whole that Nature herself had fixed their limits. But now that in the first place we went to war with each other for the possession of Sicily and next for that of Spain, now that, finally refusing to listen to the admonition of Fortune, we have gone so far that your native soil was once in imminent danger and our own still is, what remains but to

⁸²⁴ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.25.

⁸²⁵ Polybius, *The Histories*, 15.5.3 & Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.29.2.

consider by what means we can avert the anger of the gods and compose our present contention?”⁸²⁶

He continued on a more personal note:

“But I fear that you, Publius, both because you are very young and because success has constantly attended you both in Spain and in Africa, and you have never up to now at least fallen into the counter-current of Fortune, will not be convinced by my words, however worthy of credit they may be. Consider things by the light of one example, an example not drawn from remote times, but from our own. I, then, am that Hannibal who after the battle of Cannae became master of almost the whole of Italy, who not long afterwards advanced even up to Rome, and encamping at forty stades from the walls deliberated with myself how I should treat you and your native soil. And now here I am in Africa on the point of negotiating with you, a Roman, for the safety of myself and my country. Consider this, I beg you, and be not overproud, but take such counsel at the present

⁸²⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 15.6.4-7.

“δεξιωσαμενος δε πρωτος Ἀννιβας ηρξατο λεγειν ως εβουλετο μεν αν μητε Ῥωμαιοις επιθυμησαι μηδεποτε μηδενος των εκτος Ἰταλιας μητε Καρχηδονιους των εκτος Λιβυης· αμφοτεροις γαρ ειναι ταυτας και καλλιστας δυναστειας και συλληβδην ως αν ει περιωρισμενας υπο της φυσεως. ἔπει δε πρωτον μεν υπερ των κατα Σικελιαν αμφισβητησαντες εξεπολεμωσαμεν αλληλους, μετα δε ταυτα παλιν υπερ των κατ’ Ἰβηριαν, το δε τελος υπο της τυχης ουπω νουθετουμενοι μεχρι τουτου προβεβηκαμεν ωστε και περι του της πατριδος εδαφους ους μεν κεκινδυνευκεναι, τους δ’ ακμην ετι και νυν κινδυνευειν, λοιπον εστιν, ει πως δυναμεθα δι’ αυτων παραιτησαμενοι τους θεους διαλυσασθαι την ενεστωσαν φιλοτιμιαν.”

juncture as a mere man can take, and that is ever to choose the most good and the least evil.”⁸²⁷

Hannibal then outlined his proposals, as follows:

“ ‘I propose that all the countries that were formerly a subject of dispute between us, that is Sicily, Sardinia, and Spain, shall belong to Rome and that Carthage shall never make war upon Rome on account of them. Likewise that the other islands lying between Italy and Africa shall belong to Rome. Such terms of peace would, I am convinced, be most secure for the Carthaginians and most honourable to you and to all the Romans.’ ”⁸²⁸

⁸²⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 15.7.1-5.

“σε δ’ αγωνιω, Ποπλιε, λιβαν’ εφη ‘και δια το νεον ειναι κομιδη και δια το παντα σοι κατα λογον κεχωρηκεναι και τα κατα την ‘Ιβηριαν και τα κατα την Λιβυην και μηδεπω μεχρι γε του νυν εις την της τυχης εμπεπτωκεναι παλιρρυμην, μηποτ’ ου πειδθης δια ταυτα τοις εμοις λογοις, καιπερ ουσι πιστοις. Σκοπει δ’ αφ’ ενος των λογων τα πραγματα, μη τα των προγεγονοτων, αλλα τα καθ’ ημας αυτους. ειμι τοιγαρουν ‘Αννιβας εκεινος, ος μετα την εν Κανναις μαχην σχεδον απασης ‘Ιταλιας εγκρατης γενομενος μετα τινα χρονον ηκον προς αυτην την ‘Ρωμην, και στρατοπεδευσας εν τετταρακοντα σταδιοις εβουλευομην υπερ υμων και του της υμετερας πατριδος εδαφους πως εστι μοι χρηστεον, ος νυν εν Λιβυη παρειμι προς σε ‘Ρωμαιον οντα περι της εμαυτου και των Καρχηδονιων σωτηριας κοινολογησομενος. εις α βλποντα παρακαλω σε μη μεγα φρονειν, αλλ’ ανθρωπινως βουλευεσθαι περι των ενεστωτων· τουτο δ’ εστι των μεν αγαθων αει το μεγαιστον, των κακων δε τουλαχιστον αιρεισθαι.”

⁸²⁸ Polybius, The Histories, 15.7.8-9.

“παντα περι ων προτερον ημφισβητησαμεν, ‘Ρωμαιων υπαρχειν – ταυτα δ’ ην Σικελια, Σαρδω, το κατα την ‘Ιβηριαν – και μηδεποτε Καρχηδονιους ‘Ρωμαιοις υπερ τουτων ανταραι πολεμον· ομοιως δε και τας αλλας νησους, οσαι μεταξυ κεινται της ‘Ιταλιας και Λιβυης, ‘Ρωμαιων υπαρχειν. ταυτας γαρ πεπεισμαι τας συνθηκας και προς το μελλον ασφαλεστατας μεν ειναι

Again, although these passages are set-piece narratives by Polybius, they illustrate the sacrifice Hannibal was willing to assume to realize his third and final strategy regarding the war with Rome – damage control in the defense of Carthage. If we take into consideration Grant’s recollections in 1879 of the events leading up to Lee’s surrender at Appomattox we can grasp how two warring generals can exhibit a distinct mutual respect for the abilities of his foe. And even though the campaign may be all but won the victory does not diminish the honour of the defeated general or the welfare of his country.

“The object of my campaign was not Richmond, not the defeat of Lee in actual fight, but to remove him and his army out of the contest. You see the war was an enormous strain upon the country. Rich as we were I do not see how we could have endured it another year, even from a financial point of view. So with these views I wrote Lee...he does not appear well in that correspondence, not nearly so well as he did in our subsequent interviews, where his whole bearing was that of a patriotic and gallant soldier, concerned alone for the welfare of his army and his state.”⁸²⁹

Καρχηδονιοις, ενδοξοτατας δε σοι και πασι 'Ρωμαιοις.” & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, page 452.

⁸²⁹ J.R. Young, Around the World With General Grant, Vol. 2 (Washington, DC, 1879), page 546.

Hannibal's Defeat at Zama⁸³⁰

Although Hannibal offered terms far less favourable than those agreed upon by Carthage previously, for the senate had agreed to surrender Spain, Sicily, and Sardinia, return their prisoners without ransom, hand over most of their warships, and pay the Romans five thousand talents, they violated the peace. The attempt to negotiate a peace settlement failed. Scipio ended demanded that Hannibal either place Carthage at Rome's mercy, or to fight.⁸³¹ The two generals parted and returned to their lines in preparation for the coming battle.⁸³²

Why did Hannibal take the time to negotiate when he knew he must fight Scipio before Masinissa and his cavalry arrived? Masinissa's 6,000 foot and 4,000 formidable Numidian cavalry strengthened Scipio's already superb Roman horsemen and for once Rome had the better cavalry force. What drove the battered, hungry men on of the Confederacy: the glory of the Southern Cause? Could it be the honour of their country? The answer lay not in these things, but in the confidence and faith General Lee continued to inspire. But what must Lee have felt on April 8th when he concentrated the remnant of his ragged, hungry army between Appomattox Station, on the rail line, and Appomattox

⁸³⁰ For more on the battle of Zama, see Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 285-290; B. Caven, The Punic Wars, pages 249-252; L. Cottrell, Hannibal, pages 226-239; H. Delbrück, Warfare in Antiquity, pages 370-376; T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 596-612; A. Goldsworthy, The Punic Wars, pages 300-307; S. Lancel, Carthage: A History, pages 400-401; S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 172-176; J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, pages 216-226; A. Santosuosso, Soldiers, Citizens & the Symbols of War: From Classical Greece to Republican Rome 500-167 B.C. (Boulder, CO, 1997), pages 190-198 & H.H. Scullard, A History of the Roman World 753 to 146 B.C., pages 236-239.

⁸³¹ Polybius, The Histories, 15.8 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, pages 452 & 453.

⁸³² Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30.29-31.

Court House, a few miles to the northeast? In both instances, how much farther could Hannibal or Lee lead the men who put their lives in each man's hands?

In Hannibal's case facing the Roman infantry, he placed a line of eighty elephants. Behind them he placed Ligurian and Gallic infantry with some Moorish and Balearic light troops. Drawn behind the infantry stood the Carthaginian and African troops. Finally, in the rear he placed the veterans of his Italian campaigns, under his personal command. The cavalry occupied the wings, the Carthaginians on the right facing Laelius, and the Numidians on the left facing Masinissa.⁸³³ Hannibal's total force numbered 55,000 men; Scipio, with the addition of Masinissa's 10,000 men, commanded at most 36,000 troops. Scipio placed Masinissa and his horsemen on his right wing. The fleet commander Laelius commanded the Italian cavalry on the left wing. In between the cavalry wings, he placed the heavy Roman infantry in the usual three lines, placing them one behind the other to leave clear lanes between each cohort running through the troops from front to rear.

Hannibal sought to compensate for his cavalry's deficiency by releasing his war elephants against the Roman infantry to break their formation, but Scipio was well prepared for his tactic. When the elephants charged, Scipio had his troops spread in normal battle formation with the men re-formed into columns, leaving wide alleys between. He further instructed the men to blast war trumpets, accompanied by shouts, banging metal on metal, as much noise as possible to cause the elephants to shy away from the noise and into the alley ways. As they passed, archers shot at their handlers. Other elephants, met by a shower of javelins from the Roman front line, turned about and trampled into the Carthaginian cavalry's left wing. Before they could recover, Masinissa charged them furiously. The massed charge, which Hannibal had depended, proved

⁸³³ Livy. Ab Urbe Condita, 30.33.

utterly ineffective. Thus, Livy states, “On both sides the Punic battle-line had been stripped of its cavalry when the infantry clashed, no longer matched either in their hopes or in their strength.”⁸³⁴ Now the real battle began.

Hannibal’s African and Carthaginian troops who formed the second line had not moved. As the *hastati* came to grips with the troops forming Hannibal’s second line, the wearied Gauls and Ligurians who formed the front line were forced back upon them. Now he ordered the second line into action. Seeing their comrades in difficulties, the *principes* and *triarii* of the Roman second and third lines began to waver, but they responded to their officer’s call. The Roman infantry now outnumbered the second line of Carthaginians so that their line flowed around the flanks of their enemy, hemming them in. Gradually, the second line of Hannibal’s troops was overcome. Those who survived fled back to where the third line waited to attack. When the remnants of the second line tried to force their way back they were met by a row of spears and forced to retreat toward the flanks. “And by this time there were almost two battles in one, since the Carthaginians were forced to engage with the enemy and at the same time with their own men.”⁸³⁵ So began the final phase of the battle. The Romans had penetrated to their real antagonists, Hannibal’s veterans from the Italian campaign, under the personal command of their leader. As Polybius saw Hannibal’s use of his third line of veterans as a reserve was possibly the first example of the use of a true reserve in ancient warfare.⁸³⁶

⁸³⁴ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.34.1. “Utrimque nudata equite erat Punica acies cum pedes concurrat, nec spe nec viribus iam par.”

⁸³⁵ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.34.7. “Et prope duo iam permixta proelia erant, cum Carthaginienses simul cum hostibus, simul cum suis cogerentur manus conserere.”

⁸³⁶ Polybius, *The Histories*, 15.15.3 & J.F. Lazenby, *Hannibal’s War*, page 256.

Faced with this moving wall, Scipio allowed his infantry to give way while his cavalry executed a flanking manoeuvre. Indeed Polybius says that “...the contest was for long doubtful, the men falling where they stood out of determination, until Masinissa and Laelius, returning from the pursuit of the cavalry, arrived providentially at the proper moment.”⁸³⁷ The triumphant Romans and Masinissa’s forces turned the battle into a massacre. And, though most of Hannibal’s veterans fought grimly on they were cut to pieces. At the end of the day 20,000 Carthaginians lay dead, and nearly 20,000 captured in what was the last engagement of the 2nd Roman War – the war was over.

How did Lee handle the final struggle of the War Between the States and how do his actions compare to Hannibal’s? Beginning in the confusion after Richmond’s fall, Lee hoped to join his forces with those of Joseph E. Johnston in North Carolina in order to prolong the war.⁸³⁸ No one knew better than Robert E. Lee that Union victory was now inevitable. At this point, motivated by a sense of obligation, Lee felt it his duty to continue to fight while he still could to preserve as much a chance as possible to negotiate surrender terms that were at least something more than abject and unconditional. Lee took his diminished army, slighter fewer than 50,000 men and marched west. With the Union army in chase, he tried to reach Amelia Courthouse where he expected to find supplies and gain access to the Danville and Richmond Railroad, which would take his army to Johnston. Obviously, Lee found himself in much the same situation as Hannibal on this occasion.

⁸³⁷ Polybius, The Histories, 15.14.6-7.

“...εν αυταις ταις χωραις εναποθνησκοντων των ανδρων δια φιλοτιμιαν, εως οι περι τον Μασαννασαν και Λαιλιον απο του διωγματος των ιππεων ανακαμπτοντες [και] δαιμονιως εις δεοντα καιρον συνηψαν.”

⁸³⁸ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 217.

No one had dispatched the promised rations – a fact that hit the half-starved army particularly hard. Sheridan sent a brigade to reconnoiter in the direction of Lee's retreat, and, at Amelia Springs, attacked a wagon train attached to Lee's army. Having failed to connect with rations and supplies at Amelia Court House and unable to make a rail connection there, Lee turned to the southwest, bound for Rice Station, where he could get supplies by rail, then push south to link up with Johnston. Grant, however, ordered attacks, and pursuing Federal forces hit the Confederate wagon train.⁸³⁹ Confederate general Richard S. Ewell counterpunched, driving back the Union center; but the arrival of more Federals soon checked his efforts. As Federal strength continued to build, the Union forces were able to counter attack and surround – a double envelopment – Ewell's badly outnumbered command. Although three confederate commanders escaped, Ewell remained behind in an effort to lead his troops out of the trap. The hand-to-hand-fighting proved fierce, but hopeless. Ewell's men were engulfed, and he was captured, along with five other Confederate commanders, including George Washington Custis Lee, Robert E. Lee's eldest son. As for Gen. Lee, the commander in chief witnessed the battle from high ground in the rear. At 10:00 p.m. that night, Lee received a message from Gen. Grant, requesting the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee refused.⁸⁴⁰

By April 5th, the bulk of Lee's army was concentrated at Amelia Courthouse, about 30 miles west of Petersburg, blocked by Sheridan and others from making a break to the Richmond and Danville Railroad. When Gen. Custer's division moved rapidly against Appomattox Station, they drove off two Confederate divisions, and captured their supply train, as well as thirty pieces of artillery. Custer then pressed on toward Appomattox Court House where he discovered the Confederate defenses just to the

⁸³⁹ B. Davis, Gray Fox, pages 357-376.

⁸⁴⁰ B. Davis, Gray Fox, page 389.

southwest of the town. Sheridan, with the main body of troops, caught up with Custer and prepared to launch an attack the next day. However, it was Robert E. Lee's generals, John Brown Gordon and Fitzhugh Lee who attacked first on the morning April 9, 1865. While Gordon and Lee assaulted the hastily constructed Federal breastworks, the Union cavalry and infantry pressed from the northeast – from Appomattox Court House – and, having gotten across Lee's line of march, also closed in from the southwest, Appomattox Station. At this point, Lee was down to 30,000 soldiers, of whom only little more than half were armed.⁸⁴¹ He saw that his broken army lay within the jaws of a vise. The army could not go forward, nor could it retreat. It was time to end it, for Lee knew that his entire army of thirty thousand men were willing to die if he did not choose to stop the fighting now. "...there is nothing left for me to do but go and see Gen. Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths...How easily I could be rid of this, and be at rest!" Lee said, "I have only to ride along the line and all will be over. But it is our duty to live. What will become of the women and children of the South if we are not here to protect them?"⁸⁴² This too must have been in Hannibal's mind when the battle of Zama came to an end: what will become of Carthage if I am not here to protect her?

Hannibal managed to escape the scene of his defeat with a small escort and retired to Hadrumentum. To return at once to the city of Carthage in a state of emergency, directly after the disaster alone and without support invited crucifixion. Hannibal would have been placed at the mercy of his enemies. Many Carthaginian generals had been so harshly punished by the Council of Hundred and Four when a war or battle had been unsuccessful. Stopping at Hadrumentum allowed him enough time to obtain guarantees for his safety and enabled him to present himself in Carthage with an adequate escort.

⁸⁴¹ B. Davis, Gray Fox, pages 397-401.

⁸⁴² B. Davis, Gray Fox, page 401.

Before the Council he reported he had lost not only the battle, but also the war. He had no choice now but to advise the Carthaginians to accept the best terms they were offered.⁸⁴³ For the first time in his long career he had met his match not so much by a general, but by a lack of sufficiently trained cavalry.⁸⁴⁴ Even now other Numidians, under a son of Syphax, were being mustered to come to his aid, but they reached Carthaginian territory too late.

According to Livy, as Hannibal addressed the people's assembly, a single hard-line voice rang out against the treaty. Hannibal exasperated, hurled the man down from the platform. After apologizing for his manners, he urgently advised that they should agree without argument to conditions, which, bearing in mind the relative forces involved, could have been worse.⁸⁴⁵ And Polybius concludes they voted to make the treaty with the conditions set out by Scipio.

Seeing their great general and last army defeated, Carthage lay defenseless. Even though a siege would have been long and hard, Scipio's conditions for peace were reasonable: all deserters, prisoners of war, and slaves were to be handed over to Rome; Carthage's warships were to be reduced to no more than 10 triremes; Carthage was to retain its former territory in Africa, and its own laws, but Masinissa was to have completed control of his kingdom; Carthage must never make war on anyone, either within Africa or beyond without Roman permission; and since they had broken the truce, the original war indemnity was doubled, although they were allowed to pay in annual installments over a 50-year period. All war elephants were to be surrendered and no more

⁸⁴³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30.35.11.

⁸⁴⁴ Polybius, The Histories, 15.13.2 & 15.15.7-8 & F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius. Vol. II, page 464.

⁸⁴⁵ Polybius, The Histories, 15.19.1 & Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30.37.7.

trained, while at the same time one hundred hostages were to be delivered to Rome as insurance against further treachery. The Carthaginians were to supply grain for the Roman army for three months, along with its pay until Rome ratified the peace treaty.⁸⁴⁶ The terms of the treaty Grant wrote for ending the conflict with Lee were generous as well. He would take no prisoners, but simply secure the paroles of officers and men not to take up arms until properly exchanged; for while the principal Confederate army had been vanquished, the war was not yet over. Officers were permitted to retain their sidearms, and officers and men could keep their horses and their personal effects. Everyone would be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observed their paroles.⁸⁴⁷

Considering all the tragedy Hannibal had inflicted on the Romans over so many years, it is surprising that Rome did not demand the surrender of Hannibal himself. It can only be concluded that Scipio must have had a great admiration and respect for his opponent as confirmed earlier by Grant for Lee. He may have also seen that Carthage needed a strong leader at the helm or they would collapse in ruins. To ensure that Carthage fulfilled the terms of the peace treaty, paid the reparations, and settled quietly again in North Africa, Carthage needed a man who fully appreciated how fortunate the city was to have been allowed any acceptable terms at all. This man was Hannibal.⁸⁴⁸ The respect Scipio possessed for Hannibal is shown again in Robert E. Lee's adversary, General Ulysses S. Grant. Lee was particularly grateful for the generous treatment he received at Appomattox and Grant even threatened to resign his commission in the Army

⁸⁴⁶ Polybius, The Histories, 15.18.2; F.W. Walbank, A Historical Commentary on Polybius, Vol. II, pages 467 & 468 and Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 30.37.2.

⁸⁴⁷ B. Catton, The Civil War, page 266.

⁸⁴⁸ E. Bradford, Hannibal, page 228.

if Andrew Johnson continued to persecute Lee. Indeed Scipio's opposition in the senate considered the lenient terms proposed by him for the peace treaty between Carthage and Rome not enough to extract from Carthage for the seventeen years of desolation inflicted by Hannibal. Further, they viewed Scipio as a young man who achieved his victory far removed from the suffering in Italy. However, instigated by Scipio's supporters, the decision was referred from the Senate to the popular assembly. The common man wanted peace and the treaty was ratified by the spring of 201 B.C.⁸⁴⁹

Hannibal: Exile and Death⁸⁵⁰

After the traumatic spectacle of the five hundred warships making up the Carthaginian battle fleet, which seems to have worried Scipio far more than Hannibal's presence, being towed out to sea and set on fire, Scipio and the Roman army embarked for Rome. Hannibal was allowed to retain his military command and was additionally appointed civil magistrate. With Hannibal's new duties he set about the massive task of reconstruction. Apart from the warships, the town's vital parts had not been affected and of the twenty years of war, Carthage had only suffered two on its home ground. They waged the war mainly using African, Spaniards, Gauls and Italiots, and comparatively few of its own sons died in the fighting. Despite years of war, the city's commercial prosperity survived, even after the loss of Spain. Additionally, during the war the Romans had done little to suppress the trade between the Levant and the Western Mediterranean as it continued to flow along the North African coast.

⁸⁴⁹ E. Bradford, Hannibal, pages 228-229.

⁸⁵⁰ For a detailed account of Hannibal's activities after the battle of Zama, see G.P. Baker, Hannibal, pages 277-328; Sir G. de Beer, Hannibal: The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean, pages 290-302 and especially S. Lancel, Hannibal, pages 176-210.



Exile from Carthage

The end of the War Between the States brought dramatic change to Lee's life. The Custis-Lee fortune was greatly reduced and Arlington was lost. His military career terminated, he was barred from public office, for which he was eminently qualified. Although he was among the first to accept the result of the war and to apply for amnesty, his petition was not acted upon until more than a century after his death. However, Lee held no bitterness, nor did he indulge in self-pity. Determined to set an example for fellow Southerners, he hoped the emotions of war years would be forgotten and the work of rebuilding the South and creating a great, unified America could be accomplished. His superb dignity, courage, and noble character in the difficult post-war years intensified admiration for him, earning him the respect of even his former enemies. In defeat, Lee achieved his highest level of greatness.

Based on this assessment of Lee's post-war years we can appreciate that from the end of the war and for the following seven years Hannibal devoted himself to the affairs of his country and to rebuilding the trade prosperity of Carthage. No longer an expatriate, he devoted himself exclusively to Carthaginian home affairs and to ensuring that his country kept faith with the Romans. It was Hannibal's financial skill that helped insure that Carthage met the war reparations Rome had expected to go unfulfilled. Without the payment as the terms proscribed, Rome would have been given the opportunity to invade, causing the Roman hatred of Hannibal to revive. From the beginning of his task, Hannibal ran up against the hatred of his old enemies – the former peace faction that had declared trade, not war, the business of Carthage. They remained deliberately ignorant of the fact that as Rome expanded it never would have left their city in peace. A report by Livy states Hannibal burst into bitter laughter during the unrestrained lamentations and weeping when it came time to pay the first annual installment to Rome. When Hasdrubal Haedus rebuked Hannibal for his laughter, Hannibal revealed his contempt for those

shopkeepers who had remained unmoved when their homeland was placed under Roman supervision, but now wept, incapable of understanding that they were bewailing the least of their misfortunes.⁸⁵¹ He had many enemies among the rich citizens of Carthage, for he had denounced a number of highly placed officials whose dishonestly he had uncovered. Since the people's assembly began to encroach on the prerogatives of the senate, the power of the *suffete* and his influence in the state strengthened. Polybius places this "democratic" development at the start of the Barcid era when in 196 Hannibal was elected *suffete*.⁸⁵²

When Hannibal entered office he made use of a disagreement relating to financial matters with a magistrate to attack the powerful class of judges. He sent for the offending magistrate to give an account of his actions. The latter who belonged to the Barcid opposition ignored the summons, whereupon, Hannibal had him arrested and brought before the people's assembly. He proposed an immediate vote on a law whereby the judges would be elected annually, and none able to hold the office two years in succession.⁸⁵³ It is not surprising that Hannibal did everything in his power to keep the senators in check. Among them were the same men who had been opposing the Barcid policies for over forty years and whom he did his best to force to restore their ill-gotten gains, in order to alleviate, if not abolish, the contributions of the ordinary citizens to payment of the war indemnity. His act of checking the accounts enabled him to assess how much of the public finances (land and sea taxes) were lost due to misappropriation of funds by these officials. He declared before the people's assembly that by demanding the

⁸⁵¹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 30.44.4-11.

⁸⁵² Polybius, *The Histories*, 6.51 & F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, Vol. I, pages 735 & 736.

⁸⁵³ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 33.46.3.

repayment of all the sums embezzled the state would be rich enough to acquit itself of its financial obligations to Rome without the need to tax private individuals. And according to Livy, he kept his word.⁸⁵⁴ In his years of public service he undertook administrative and constitutional changes to end the existing oligarchic system of government. His fate was sealed.

During his year as *suffete*, Hannibal created many enemies in high places. A faction hostile to Hannibal in the senate wrote letters to the Roman senate denouncing the secret contacts, which according to them, Hannibal was having with Antiochus.⁸⁵⁵ Scipio addressed the Roman Senate as follows; "...it was undignified for the Roman people to become parties to the animosities of Hannibal's accusers, to lend the support of official prestige to party strife at Carthage..."⁸⁵⁶ His words went unheeded. There were many in the Roman Senate who watched with suspicion and jealousy the commercial success of Carthage under Hannibal's direction and leadership.⁸⁵⁷ Cato and his followers seized the opportunity as a pretext to act against him and sent an embassy to indict Hannibal before the senate and bring him back to Rome. Attorney General James Speed knew personally of General Grant's involvement in saving Lee from imprisonment and was convinced that it was Grant alone who saved Lee from this fate – a fate, which Johnson passionately wished to enforce. Speed recalled, "Grant expressed his unalterable determination that the terms he had written at Appomattox not be violated. He said, 'That is the way General

⁸⁵⁴ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 33.47.2; S. Lancel, *Hannibal*, pages 181-182.

⁸⁵⁵ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 33.45.6.

⁸⁵⁶ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 33.47.4-5. "... qui parem ex dignitate populi Romani esse ducebat subscribere odiis accusatorum Hannibalis et factionibus Carthaginensium..."

⁸⁵⁷ More information on Hannibal's term as *suffete* can be found in S. Lancel, *Carthage*, pages 401-404 & S. Lancel, *Hannibal*, pages 180-182.

Lee and I understood it at the time, and I will be drawn and quartered before they shall be violated.”⁸⁵⁸ General Grant thwarted the jealousy and vindictiveness of President Johnson through his overwhelming popularity among both northern and southern citizens. Confederate general Joe Johnson relates, “...Grant declared that if any Federal official molested Lee, then he would surrender his commission in the United States army. I have always felt that General Grant should be entitled to the gratitude of all Confederate soldiers for this act.”⁸⁵⁹

Hannibal had no such champion within his own people and soon realized he had been betrayed. Having foreseen the possibility of having to flee without warning, he established an escape plan. After being seen in public, at nightfall instead of returning home, he was met by two servants with horses at the gate of the town. Riding throughout the night he traveled over 150 kilometers to the property he owned on the edge of the sea. There ready to cast off was a ship to take him to the isle of Cercina. From Cercina he reached Tyre and in 195 B.C. fled to the court of Antiochus.⁸⁶⁰ When the Carthaginian senate learned of Hannibal’s escape they proceeded to confiscate his property, demolish his home from its foundations, and declare him an outlaw.⁸⁶¹ In a similar action the confiscation of Mary Custis Lee’s home after the conclusion of the War Between the States is a testament to a parallel hatred by the Union. I am sure Hannibal’s property passed from generation to generation as did Mary Lee’s home.⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁸ J.G. Wilson, Life and Public Services of General Ulysses S. Grant (Washington, DC, 1885), page 98.

⁸⁵⁹ J.G. Wilson, Life and Public Services of General Ulysses S. Grant, page 98.

⁸⁶⁰ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 33.45.6 & Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 23.7.

⁸⁶¹ Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 23.7.

⁸⁶² J.E. Peters, Arlington National Cemetery, page 26. General Lee technically never owned the property – his wife Mary Anna Randolph Custis inherited the estate upon her father’s death in 1857 – nevertheless, the

For the remaining thirteen years of his life Hannibal moved among the courts of the princes of western Asia who were still hostile to Rome. In 191 B.C. he convinced Antiochus to march upon Rome with his armies. However, Antiochus, unwilling to follow his advice in the conduct of the war, sent Hannibal to Phoenicia to raise and command his navy.⁸⁶³ Although Hannibal must have seen that many of the king's plans were unwise, he never deserted his cause.

In 190 B.C. Hannibal left Phoenicia in command of a fleet of ships, while Rome's ally, the Rhodians left Regellus at Samos to intercept him. The prytaneis had two days before his arrival at Rhodes and sent Pamphilidas with thirteen ships south, in the face of intelligence reports of Hannibal's immediate arrival. Hannibal did not disappoint the Rhodian navy. He may well have been training his crews as he moved north from Phoenicia. His delay in putting to sea forced his fleet to fight its way north against opposing Etesian winds, the voyage Livy notes, usually ruled out at this time of the year.⁸⁶⁴ The mid-summer climate also affected the Rhodian commander Eudamus badly for Phaselis was near a malarial swamp and growing illness among the Rhodian crews forced their commanders to shift the site of their ambush to the mouth of the Eurymedon

symbol of the Confederacy that he represented became inextricably fused to the house. Heavy fighting in northern Virginia produced a constant stream of wounded and dying Union soldiers flowing into Washington. By 1864 the escalating body count caused Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to direct Quartermaster General, Montgomery C. Meigs, to find a new spot to bury the endless influx of corpses. Meigs chose Arlington House, which looked down upon the Federal capital and was considered "a defiance" to many passionate Unionists in the city. The first soldiers were buried there in mid-May, 1864, roughly coinciding with the carnage of the Wilderness Campaign, and by the end of June 2,600 bodies had been buried there.

⁸⁶³ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 37.8.3.

⁸⁶⁴ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 37.23.4.

river. Both fleets were in cruising formation when they sighted each other at daybreak. Livy's figures for the battle give the Rhodians 32 quadriremes and four triremes. Hannibal commanded 37 larger, very heavy vessels, surrounded by 10 triremes.⁸⁶⁵

Hannibal's uncanny ability to mold any sort of troops into supremely functional units had made him the terror of Rome for years. His great skill as a commander allowed him on this occasion to convert his own cruising formation into a proper line of battle before Eudamus could match his move. Hannibal undoubtedly had planned his tactics with Apollonius who commanded the landward wing of the Syrian line. Hannibal's superior speed in forming a line of battle caused the Rhodian fleet to begin the battle in the gravest danger.

The Rhodian admiral rushed his own attack before Hannibal could flank his line by engaging the seaward wing of Hannibal's fleet with his flagship and four escorts. Although throughout the battle the Rhodians' seaward flank remained in danger of collapsing under the press of Hannibal's superior numbers and larger warships, it did not collapse. It is a testament to Hannibal that even in this engagement off Side in Paphlea where the smaller more maneuverable Rhodian ships defeated the Syrian navy, Hannibal remained victorious on the wing where he fought in person.⁸⁶⁶

With the defeat of Antiochus by Scipio Africanus and his brother Lucius in a land battle at Magnesia, Rome called for the surrender of Hannibal in their terms of settlement.⁸⁶⁷ Again accounts of his subsequent actions vary. In one story he joined the rebel forces in Armenia, helping to found the new royal city of Artaxata. Another story is that he fled via Crete to the court of King Prusias II of Bithynia in northern Asia Minor.

⁸⁶⁵ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 37.23.5-10.

⁸⁶⁶ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 37.24.2-10.

⁸⁶⁷ Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, 37.23-4.

Either way, he eventually took refuge with Prusias, who at this time was engaged in warfare with Rome's ally, King Eumenes II of Pergamum. At his court Hannibal spent his entire attention to the arming of the king and training his forces to meet Eumenes.⁸⁶⁸ Seeing that Prusias did not have the personal resources to wage a successful war against Rome, Hannibal set out to win the friendship and alliance of other kings of the region; however, Eumenes, due to his alliance with Rome, remained stronger than Prusias. For that reason Hannibal fashioned a plan to assassinate Eumenes.

Clearly Hannibal had not lost any of his cunning; resorting once again to a ruse. Hannibal gave orders to collect venomous snakes and put them alive in earthenware jars to be stored aboard his ships. On the day of the battle he bade his troops to concentrate their attack on Eumenes' personal ship. Furthermore, he promised a generous reward if they succeeded in either capturing or killing the king. Hannibal then sent a messenger with a letter for Eumenes. Once he located Eumenes' personal ship, the Bithynians did as Hannibal ordered and fell upon the ship in a body. When the other Pergamene ships began to press, Hannibal's marines launched the snake-filled earthenware. Terrified by the strange weapons, the Pergamene's turned their ships and retreated. As a result, Hannibal overcame the Pergamum navy by cleverness as his strategy.⁸⁶⁹ In fact, Hannibal may have used the first example of biological warfare.

Believing that while Hannibal lived they would never be free from his plots, Rome dispatched an envoy led by Flaminius to dissuade Prusias from this campaign and to express their concern that the king had given shelter to Hannibal. After the conference with Flaminius, Prusias posted a military guard over Hannibal's house, placing Hannibal

⁸⁶⁸ Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 23.9.2-3.

⁸⁶⁹ Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 24.10.

under house arrest. Hannibal had little doubt as to what was taking place.⁸⁷⁰ When he learnt of the presence of soldiers in his home, he called for a draft of poison, set aside just for such an event.⁸⁷¹ As he drained the cup he said,

“Let us free the Roman people from their long standing anxiety, seeing that they find it tedious to wait for an old man’s death. It is no magnificent or memorable victory that Flaminius will win over a man unarmed and betrayed. This day will surely prove how far the moral standards of the Romans have changed. The fathers of these Romans sent a warning to king Pyrrhus, bidding him beware of poison – and he was an enemy in arms, with an army in Italy: these Romans themselves have sent an envoy of consular rank to suggest to Prusias the crime of murdering his guest.”⁸⁷²

“Thus that bravest of men, after having performed many and varied labours, entered into rest...”⁸⁷³ Hannibal probably died in 182 or 183 B.C. Most modern historians eschew hero-worship. It is understandable, therefore, that they should find it hard to attribute effects of such worldwide significance as the course of our western history to one individual. There have been many attempts to limit Hannibal’s achievements and subject them to a distinctly slanted viewpoint. With Livy we are repeatedly told of “Punic faith” which passed among the Romans as an expression of dishonesty and faithlessness. Yet we find no grounds for the charge. A general situated as Hannibal could only be stern and even merciless in his dealings with the enemy. Of Hannibal’s character we have to judge from the narratives of his enemies whereas his military skill is without

⁸⁷⁰ Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 23.11.3.

⁸⁷¹ Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 23.12.5.

⁸⁷² Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 39.51.7-12.

⁸⁷³ Cornelius Nepos, *Hannibal*, 23.13.

question. His courage also was never in doubt, yet the chief charges that remain to this day against him are cruelty and avarice. A general who must not only win in battle, but must also feed, clothe, and even pay his army without supplies or replacements from home is truly extraordinary. For thirteen years he waged war, not with an army of his own countrymen but with men gathered from many nations – men who had neither laws, nor customs, nor language in common, differing in costume, arms, and even gods. And yet he kept them together by so close a tie that they never fought among themselves. His obvious sentimentality and patriotism for his homeland were witnessed not only in his success as a general, but also in the very fact that after he lost the war as a statesman during the reconstruction period. That he was both a visionary and a realist is the very combination, which so greatly attributed to his success.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters I have covered the course of Hannibal's career from the period leading up to the 2nd Roman War until his death in 183/82 B.C. to ascertain why and under what circumstances these events occurred. A key assumption from my examination of Hannibal's ideology and strategies with those of Robert E. Lee convinced me that the art of war is susceptible to at least two points of view. One relates entirely to the brilliance of the general and the other to the perception of the victor. Although the memory of Hannibal continued to haunt the Romans long after the destruction of Carthage, it is especially significant that we have as evidence only the testimony of those who wrote from the victor's viewpoint. Given the impossibility of truly understanding the 2nd Roman War without looking at it from Hannibal's position, my re-examination of the ancient historians' accounts is with a clear understanding of the intensity of their prejudices, which obviously influenced their perception of events. For that reason this enquiry is a novel attempt to interpret the facts from the Carthaginian perspective because, "Many of the truths we cling to are greatly dependent on our point of view."⁸⁷⁴

I have followed alongside one of the greatest generals in history and have compared him to another 'great captain' 2,000 years after Hannibal's death by suicide. However varied the arms they employed, however disparate their mobility, the armies of these two eras followed commanders who had to overcome virtually identical obstacles. By gathering fragments of information, the totality can be discovered; however, until now the data has not been offered in an inclusive format. In order to clearly convey these truths I have divided the study into five chapters, each of which contains several sections.

⁸⁷⁴ Obi-wan Kenobi, *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*, G. Lucas (20th Century Fox, 1983).

The first chapter of the study provides basically a foundation setting all the pieces on the board to show the starting positions. After the poor performance of the Carthaginian navy in the 1st Roman War, along with the weakened condition of the Carthaginians due to war reparations and the subsequent Mercenary War, Rome chose this moment of weakness to seize Sardinia and Corsica; a concern to both the politicians of Carthage and Hannibal. Carthage needed the ports of call for continued trade expansion and Hannibal understood the strategic significance of the islands as a springboard for military operations between Italy and Africa. While Hamilcar looked to Spain as a replacement of power and for the territories lost to Rome, the politicians on the other hand found risk uncomfortable. As noted, some aspects of the conflict remain constant during the period covered by the study: 1) although the people of Carthage elect the general and he has command and control over operations in the field, essentially, everything he needs to win the war; i.e., money, manpower, and materials, is furnished to him by the will of the senatorial aristocracy; 2) Hannibal learned from the 1st Roman War for the first time in history a general could not depend on his country to support him to win the war. His father's lesson clearly stated he needed to rely on his own resources and on his own strength of will. It appears implicit that Hannibal's fundamental attitude that of his deep-seated mistrust of Rome as well as his profound patriotism and concern for sound decisions were nurtured by the prevailing climate of his early years. In the last section of the chapter, I assert Hannibal's role in the instigation of the war consisted of being merely manoeuvred into a position where he had no choice but to attack Saguntum. By using a comparison with Fort Sumter I lay out the premise to be discussed fully in the following chapter.

In Chapter II after a discussion of the various possible causes for the 2nd Roman War, including the Ebro Treaty and Saguntum versus the loss of Sardinia and Corsica, I

further elucidate a new hypothesis based on Fort Sumter that by setting an impossible situation in place, a faction of Roman senators used Saguntum as a device for starting the war and placing the blame on Hannibal. The true reason for the many discrepancies as to the location of Saguntum in reference to the treaty is because the ancient historians were writing the findings from a Roman perspective based on the assumption that Rome should not appear the aggressor. In essence the true reason is the Romans forced the Carthaginians to the wall. Carthaginian ideas and practices of warfare prior to Hannibal hinged on defending what they already held, not in conquest or offensive strategies. Yet at the very time when Rome was causing an upsurge of animosity in Carthaginian hearts, Hannibal was explicitly demonstrating a new concept of warfare that prior to him had not existed: the blitzkrieg. He based his plans on the advantages of the offensive, a concentration of force, the effort to achieve surprise, and the necessity for speed. Three distinct factors are crucial in assessing the sound strategic logic Hannibal used in his decision to invade Italy by land: 1) an alternative would have been to stand on the defensive and resist Roman attacks in Spain and Africa; 2) the problem of Roman predominance at sea; and 3) the knowledge that he would find allies in Northern Italy. Hannibal began the conflict with a political strategy based on influencing foreigners. Just as the South had expectations for British and/or French intervention on behalf of its quest for independence, Hannibal offered members of the Italian confederation freedom from the yoke of Roman domination. It is my view that Hannibal must have drawn intelligence from a variety of sources on the political mood in Italy that led him to believe more than a few allies needed little incentive to defect from the Roman Alliance. Following a discussion on the make up of Rome's political system it became obvious that through Pyrrhus Hannibal would have known how the Roman Alliance System functioned as well

as how the consuls as generals performed in the field. The chapter concludes with the disposition of Hannibal's mercenaries prior to leaving Spain.

Chapter III begins with a discussion of the composition of the various mercenaries comprising the Carthaginian army compared to Rome's potential manpower. In assessing the offensive stance Hannibal took against the overwhelming manpower available to Rome I determined Hannibal had no desire to conquer Rome. This interpretation is inspired by a comparison with Lee. The fact that Lee had no illusions about conquering the Union; that if he could stage a massive, swift, and punishing raid into Union territory he could thereby force a favourable negotiated peace. We have now reached a period in the 2nd Roman War for which there is important first-hand evidence. Before crossing the Pyrenees, Hannibal saw to it that Spain and Africa were well garrisoned, and his route had been well prepared by diplomacy and reconnaissance. The march over the Alps is epic; even in Livy's narrative, Hannibal emerges as a hero. His ascent on the north side of the Alps met with opposition and treachery; he sustained frequent losses of men, animals and supplies, but by his indefatigable courage and resource he repeatedly extricated his army from traps which man and nature placed in its way. Hannibal is recorded as having reached Italy with a figure of 20,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry, a loss of at least half his entire force. In the subsequent battles of Ticinus through Cannae, Hannibal time after time demonstrates his tactical genius.

At the northern tributary of the Ticinus Hannibal's cavalry proved its superiority with the defeat of Publius Cornelius Scipio in 218, bringing the Gauls quickly to his side. In bitter winter conditions the following December, the Romans faced an attack by Hannibal at the Trebia. Dividing his army a picked Carthaginian cavalry and infantry force under Hannibal's brother Mago descended on the rear of the Roman army, shattering the Romans. In yet another manoeuvre, operating on the line of least

expectation – Hannibal took his army through the formidable swamps of the Arnus River in 217 rather than face the Roman army directly. Not expecting such a move, the Romans left the route open, permitting Hannibal to emerge behind the Roman army with a clear road to Rome. This forced the Romans to abandon their strong position and rush after the Carthaginians. Hannibal ambushed the dislocated Romans at Lake Trasimene and destroyed nearly their entire army, including the consul Flaminius. Rome, feeling the need for emergency measures, appointed Quintus Fabius Maximus dictator. Meanwhile Hannibal continued his efforts to find allies among the southern Italians. He ravaged Apulia and Campania in hopes of provoking Fabius to battle, with no success. The Senate decided that Hannibal must be brought to battle, so four new legions were mobilized and ordered to join the four already shadowing Hannibal in Apulia. At Cannae, the Carthaginian infantry overlapped the Romans as they pressed forward and assaulted them on the flanks. Using a classic double envelopment manoeuvre, Roman losses included 45,500 infantry and 2,700 cavalry, including the consul Paullus, and proconsuls Servilius and Minucius. Capitalizing on Lee's Masterpiece at Chancellorsville, it is my assertion that Rome relied solely on the superiority of its legionnaires. As the Carthaginian units manoeuvred, they could do nothing to counter their actions. Over and above the immediate positive outcome of the battle, I maintain as a result of Cannae Rome learned its most valuable lesson: continuity of command. By comparing the problems caused by the yearly collegiality of consuls with the continuous change of Union generals I validate my postulation that had Rome not lost in such an overwhelming disaster, the changes necessary for their eventual victory over Hannibal may never have been implemented.

After such an overwhelming victory at Cannae the question arises as to why Hannibal did not march on Rome. As Chapter IV opens Hannibal is confronted with various strategic possibilities for continuing the war and chooses to continue his efforts to

bring about the dissolution of the Roman Confederation. His alliance with Capua further necessitates the need for a solidified Carthaginian base in Southern Italy while he continues efforts to bring those cities along the coast into submission. Not only did he have a need for a seaport to open communications with Carthage, those allies who had come over to his side must be defended against Roman reprisal. Wherever Hannibal decided to campaign offensively, the Romans would go on to the defensive, but when he was not present, they would take the offensive against former allies who had deserted them. The only solution was to divide his forces in order to maintain this double initiative. Now it becomes obvious Hannibal adjusted his course of action as the war proceeded to meet changes in circumstances. More accurately, Hannibal planned each subsequent strategy after the first based on the current knowledge he possessed. He clearly illustrates a second strategy at this point when he switches from an offensive posture to a defensive stance designed to outlast the Roman military until reinforcements could reach him. From a treaty drawn up between Hannibal and Philip V of Macedon we know Hannibal had hopes of foreign assistance or intervention. While it was doubtful Philip would send reinforcements directly to Italy, he might bring diversion to the war through an additional front in Macedonia. Undaunted by his difficulties, Hannibal still managed to conduct a robust campaign which denied any prospect of early victory for the war-weary Roman population. As we have seen much of their strength was being diverted to reinforce Spain, Sicily, Sardinia, and Illyria. However, the alliance came to naught when Rome checked Philip with its own navy and Aetolian allies. Although the Romans achieved a decisive victory at Syracuse 212 B.C., the Carthaginians had made strenuous efforts for the support of Sicily and sent two reinforcing armies, together numbering nearly 40,000 men. For me the parallelisms between the Union general William Tecumseh Sherman's actions and those of Fabius and Marcellus led to a remarkable

discovery: ending the war meant changing the rules by ending the protection of civilians who helped to support the Carthaginian effort. Consequently, through the use of terror, which they learned from Hannibal, Rome was able to retake Capua and Syracuse even though their resources were heavily stretched by Hannibal's diplomatic efforts. Realizing the importance of Spain to the Carthaginian war effort, the Romans took offensive operations geared to strip Hannibal of his power base of wealth and possible manpower. Yet until 208 B.C. neither Hannibal nor the Romans had gained the ascendancy, but in that year Tarentum was captured by the Romans while Hasdrubal wintered in Gaul with his 20,000-strong army. The tide had changed.

In Chapter V the reality of Hannibal's situation becomes clear: without reinforcements he cannot retake the offensive measures needed to win the war. Since the politicians had not complied with his repeated requests for support, Hannibal had no choice but to depend upon his own resources to provide the needed troops. With Scipio's victories in Spain, hope of additional supplies reaching Italy came down to Hasdrubal and his army; the brothers had to meet in Italy. After crossing the Alps in 207 B.C., Hasdrubal, not knowing Hannibal's whereabouts, sent scouts to locate him. In what proved an unwise move, the men carried a letter for Hannibal giving his proposed route. After having ridden the entire length of Italy, the Romans picked up the men near Tarentum and the plan was revealed. These captured documents provided Nero the opportunity to destroy Hasdrubal's army at the Metaurus. The totality of the inconceivable misfortune of the enemy acquiring such crucial information is clearly illustrated when Union troops discover Lee's Special Order 191. Still expecting help from Hasdrubal, Hannibal learns of his brother's defeat when Nero has his severed head thrown into the Carthaginian camp. Only the death of Gen. Andrew Jackson conveys a realistic interpretation of his grief. Lee faced the death of not only a close friend but, as

had Hannibal, one of his most important officers. However, the real blow to Hannibal came from the knowledge that he was without hope of reinforcement. For the rest of the Italian campaign he was generally restricted to Bruttium for he remained at a decided disadvantage without additional men and provisions. In 204 B.C. Carthage finally sent reinforcements to Italy by Hannibal's other brother Mago. Although there is no proof for my assumption, I believe Mago used the remaining wealth of the Barca family to bring these reinforcements to Hannibal.

Prior to 205 the Carthaginians had held the strategic initiative, but now it was the Romans' turn to contain Hannibal in Italy while Scipio took the offensive to Africa. Once ashore the Romans set about raving the fertile Bagradas valley and after defeating a Carthaginian army, besieged Utica. The military reverses brought about a realignment of political power in Carthage; the Barcid faction was ousted by the wealthy landowners and merchants who had always wished to avoid war with Rome in favour of their commercial interests. Thirty senators sued for peace all the while blaming Hannibal for the war. Meanwhile Hannibal had been recalled to Carthage. It is my contention Hannibal enacts his third strategy at this time in an effort to preserve as much of Carthage as is possible. The two armies met at Zama in 202, in a battle that decided the outcome of the war. Scipio had drawn Hannibal away from his own secure base into a hostile interior where he had to fight on ground and conditions not of his own choosing. By taking the strategic decision to transfer the war to Africa, Roman victory was achieved. What Hannibal accomplished at this point is truly amazing for he was able to exert a moderating influence on those who argued against accepting Scipio terms of peace. The consideration Grant afforded Lee in his surrender at Appomattox, gives credence to the regard Scipio showed Hannibal in the peace terms ending the 2nd Roman War.

The following section in Chapter V deals with the political dedication and commitment with which Hannibal served Carthage after his defeat at Zama. His attack on the position, power, and corruption of the aristocrats proved so successful that they accused him of scheming with Antiochus III of Syria to wage another war with Rome. When Rome sent an investigation commission to Carthage, Hannibal knew it was aimed at him and made his way to Antiochus. He became a member of the Syrian court and served as a mercenary advisor to the King. After Antiochus' defeat, Hannibal went to Prussia in 183 B.C., but the Romans demanded his surrender. Unable to escape arrest, Hannibal took his own life rather than suffer further humiliation.

Although the maxims of war are simple, the application of each principle requires much care, skill, and caution. Here I propose to summarize the lessons learned in the previous chapters and demonstrate how the principles of strategy remained unchanged.⁸⁷⁵ This will show us there is a unity of genius that transcends eras and technology, a unity that makes the tasks of Hannibal Barca in 218 B.C. practically the same as those of Robert E. Lee in A.D. 1861. We have seen both Hannibal and Lee recognize when one rule of strategy is applied in a specific situation it can bring victory. For example: faced with the destruction of the Confederate army if it remained united and inactive, Robert E. Lee violated the rule of concentration of force and divided his army in order to exercise another dictum, the unexpected descent of a portion of the army upon the rear of the enemy, permitting him to win an overwhelming victory at Chancellorsville. In December 218 B.C., Rome and Carthage fought a battle near the Trebia. After a personal

⁸⁷⁵ Polybius wrote a separate work on tactics, which is now lost. A.M. Eckstein, Moral Vision in the Histories of Polybius (California, 1995), 160ff. argues that Polybius sees the task of the general as primarily imposing order on potential chaos. Because of the unknown quality of Polybius' lost work, I will those sources which are most respected by generals themselves.

reconnaissance, Hannibal divided his army and cleverly used the country to mask a cavalry and infantry force, which descended on the rear of the Roman army, causing the Romans to lose almost two thirds of their army. In example after example in this study we can see how Lee and Hannibal applied the salient principles of war and demonstrate that the principles do not change, although the circumstances under which they can be employed vary profoundly.

By examining the proliferation of surviving information about Lee, the general and the man, we can extrapolate his genius to fill in the blanks where information is missing regarding Hannibal. Through a juxtaposition of Southern and Carthaginian culture to provide a societal basis and an investigation of Lee as the missing Carthaginian viewpoint, we can then use the chronology of the original sources as the glue to bring the disparate pieces together into a completed mosaic of Hannibal's Grand Strategies. Once Hannibal's background, including his family, his education, the 1st Roman War, the Mercenary War, his education, along with the political and cultural environment prior to the War Between the States and the policies of the Carthaginian government, are interchanged with Lee's background, including his family, his education, along with the political and cultural environment prior to the War Between the States a portrait of Hannibal's true character begins to emerge.

But did Hannibal's character match that needed by a great general? According to Sun Tzu leadership is a matter of intelligence, trustworthiness, humaneness, courage, and sternness.⁸⁷⁶ Intelligence involves the ability to plan and to know when to change effectively. Courage means to seize opportunities without vacillation; and humaneness means love and compassion for people, being aware of their toils. Trustworthiness and sternness are the two virtues of leadership that wins both loyalty and obedience of the

⁸⁷⁶ Sun Tzu. The Art of War, page 44.

troops. It is my allegation that great leaders inspire extraordinary performance. Their men admire and respect them so that they would do anything rather than disappoint them. While it is true historians have differed in their views as to the effectiveness of a mercenary army, some claim mercenaries had no long-term concern for the well being of those they served, yet there is no evidence of instances where Hannibal's men deserted or showed cowardice. To fully comprehend the extraordinary troop preparations made by Hannibal prior to leaving Spain, I set up Lee's arrangements for the Confederate troops upon taking command of the Army of Northern Virginia. Since we have only the logistical measures Hannibal took, such as sending Spanish troops to Africa and Africans to Spain, an examination of Lee's accomplishments as established by A.L. Long provides us with an image of Hannibal's army of properly trained and equipped men, capable of maximum performance as needed. Even accounting for the long time it must have taken to recruit, train, and deploy a large mercenary army, what really mattered was the magnetism of Hannibal's leadership. The Army of Northern Virginia, composed of ordinary men, accomplished the seemingly impossible just as Hannibal's men did time after time. The admiration and respect Lee's men felt for their commander was so great that they would do whatever he asked of them or literally die trying. Even his defeat at Gettysburg, did not diminish their devotion, as one soldier tells him not to worry, "General, we'll fight them till Hell freezes over, and then we'll fight them on the ice."⁸⁷⁷ Later when one of Lee's staff was asked, "Does it not make the General proud to see how these men love him?" He replied, "Not proud. It awes him."⁸⁷⁸ To both Hannibal and Lee may be applied the spirit of the following words:

⁸⁷⁷ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 244.

⁸⁷⁸ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 245.

“As soon as difficulties arise – and that must always happen when great results are at stake – then things no longer move on of themselves like a well-oiled machine; the machine itself then begins to offer resistance, and to overcome this the commander must have a great force of will... As the forces in one individual after another become prostrated, and can no longer be excited and supported by an effort of his own will, the whole inertia of the war gradually rests its weight on the will of the commander: by the spark in his breast, by the light of his spirit, the spark of purpose, the light of hope, must be kindled afresh in others: in so far as he is equal to this he stands above the masses and continues to be their master; whenever that influence ceases, and his own spirit is not longer strong enough to revive the spirit of all others, the masses, drawing him down with them, sink into the lower region of animal nature, which shrinks from danger and knows not shame.”⁸⁷⁹

Of generalship in the field Napoleon once said,

“The first quality of a General-in-Chief is to have a cool head which receives exact impressions of things, which never gets heated, which never allows itself to be dazzled, or intoxicated, by good or bad news. The successive or simultaneous sensations which he receives in the course of a day must be classified, and must occupy the correct places they merit to fill, because common sense and reason are the results of the comparison of a number of sensation each equally well considered. There are certain men who, on account of their moral and physical constitution paint mental pictures out of everything; however exalted by their reason, their will, their courage, and whatever good qualities they may possess,

⁸⁷⁹ C. von Clausewitz, On War, pages 54, 55, 57.

nature has not fitted them to command armies, nor to direct great operations of war.”⁸⁸⁰

“In war,” writes Clausewitz, “it is only by means of a great directing spirit that we can expect the full power latent in the troops to be developed.”⁸⁸¹ That Hannibal and Lee did possess such genius in totally different forms is beyond question, and that neither was aware of it, and hence its mysterious driving force, is also beyond doubt. Of Hannibal’s tactical dispositions, he suited the order of his troops to the existing conditions with great ability. His habit was to campaign only in the summer months, foraging and collecting rations in strong camps or towns for the winter season. That he never failed to provide bread for his men is a remarkable feat. His extraordinary influence over men is perhaps his most wonderful trait. He earned the devotion and love of his men by his personal character alone. When the composition of his army is considered and the hardships they underwent, that there was never a desertion from his ranks, and that he eventually transported his army – composed mostly of Italians – back to Africa, and to fight with him as they did at Zama, it may be said that Hannibal’s ability shows the most amazing command over men ever possessed by a man.⁸⁸² Again in Lee we find another general able to animate an army as Hannibal. Whether it was Lee’s self-sacrificing idealism that animated the Army of Northern Virginia or Hannibal’s force of personality that kept the loyalty of his disparate troops for so many years both held their army’s captive by some degree of personal charisma. After Lee defeated the Union army that outnumbered his two to one at Chancellorsville, one of his aides described the scene as Lee rode to the front:

⁸⁸⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, Grant and Lee, pages 278-279.

⁸⁸¹ C. von Clausewitz, On War, page 77.

⁸⁸² T.A. Dodge, The Great Captains, page 71.

“One long, unbroken cheer...hailed the presence of the victorious chief. He sat in the full realization of all that soldiers dream of – triumph; and as I looked on him in the complete fruition of the success which his genius, courage, and confidence in his army had won. I thought that it must have been from some such scene that men in ancient days ascended to the dignity of gods.”⁸⁸³

Of courage, morale, physical endurance, self-reliance, resolution and self-command, “Courage above all things is the first quality of a warrior,”⁸⁸⁴ whether a simple soldier in the ranks or a general-in-chief; for courage is of both and it unites both. A man of courage, a man who fears not to die, a man who is possessed of something superior to mere living, this is the type of man who has always ennobled war. Such was the lightning, which fired Hannibal’s Carthaginian army and Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia.

Again it is important to note that without personal leadership there can be no full manifestation of personality. Napoleon realized this when he said: “The personality of the general is indispensable, he is the head, he is the all of an army...It was not before the Carthaginian soldiers that Rome was made to tremble, but before Hannibal...”⁸⁸⁵ Hannibal’s genius when it comes to strategy, the movement and tactical deployment of great armies on the battlefield is impossible to fault. He had been bred for war and the world of the soldier was natural to him. In the early years of his campaigns in Italy he enjoyed the benefit of the divided Roman military command and quickly exploited differences between the two consuls who opposed him. He was fortunate to possess so fine a mechanism of warfare as his Numidian horsemen, whose speed and adaptability increasingly confounded the Romans, and in the early stages of the war contributed

⁸⁸³ A. Kaltman, The Genius of Robert E. Lee, page 244.

⁸⁸⁴ C. von Clausewitz, On War, page 47.

⁸⁸⁵ J.F.C. Fuller, Grant and Lee, page 282.

largely to his victories at Trebia, Lake Trasimene, and Cannae. His handling of the cavalry, both light and heavy proved masterly, and it was not until Scipio learned from Hannibal that the Romans were able to face the Carthaginians in victory. Hannibal possessed a fine team of officers who taught the world war is for professionals. His genius for leadership is proven by the fact that he held his army of mercenaries together for sixteen years on a foreign soil without once experiencing a mutiny. Hannibal was a general with a quick, adaptable mind. His every battlefield became an opportunity to create a new masterpiece. Making the land work for him, he drew upon it his grand design.⁸⁸⁶ Writers in modern times have used Hannibal's campaigns to illustrate practically every known principle of war. His advance planning and bold strategic manoeuvres in broad sweeps from Spain across the Alps and Italy showed an appreciation of strategic problems most unusual for his age. Military officers through the ages – as late as General Norman Schwarzkopf of Gulf War fame – have studied Hannibal's genius and used his tactics.⁸⁸⁷

Great leaders see beyond individual battles to the entire conflict, and make their decisions accordingly. In fact, the ultimate victory belongs to the general who is able to continually reassess the scope of the conflict and keep pushing on to the next engagement. At a crucial moment, leaders must rely on something beyond their intellect, beyond their factual analysis of the situation. That something has to come from within. Robert E. Lee has taught me that at the heart of leadership lay conviction. The leaders in

⁸⁸⁶ For more on Hannibal's character, see T.A. Dodge, The Great Captains, page 71; T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, pages 613-641 & J. Peddie, Hannibal's War, pages 189-200. For an excellent comparison of the qualities of Hannibal to those of Alexander the Great and G. Julius Caesar, see T.A. Dodge, Caesar (Boston, 1892), pages 755-767.

⁸⁸⁷ Timewatch, BBC. *Interview with Norman Schwarzkopf* (September 13, 1996).

the War Between the States had to call upon a reserve of courage. Physical courage, certainly, but also personal courage built upon a deep conviction. There can be no doubt whatsoever that Hannibal possessed the qualities of leadership. However, relying on the political aristocracy of Carthage more than on reflection his assumptions frequently misled him. Nevertheless, Hannibal's success as a realistic and innovative strategist, as well as his appreciation of the opponent's military possibilities and superb operational skills, give him a valid claim to greatness.⁸⁸⁸

Then if Hannibal did everything correctly, why did he fail to subjugate Rome? In a military sense you cannot have a perfect general and still fail; however, it is my assertion that Hannibal was a perfect general, but failed because of the political interference and lack of support he received from the Carthaginian government. In terms of *The Art of War*, victors are those generals who are not constrained by government. This point is a very delicate one; Sun Tzu says civilian leadership that interferes ignorantly with the general in the field "takes away victory by deranging the military."⁸⁸⁹ For Carthage the importance of political strategy overshadowed the economic and strategic initiatives for the war developed into contest between the politicians of two capital cities rather than a conflict between generals in the field. To ensure that my logic is correct it seems important at this point to outline the complexity of Hannibal's grand strategies as proof of its multiplicity and that he did everything correctly.

Based on von Clausewitz's four maxims of how to accomplish a grand strategical plan, let us begin with an analysis of Hannibal's first line of attack. According to von

⁸⁸⁸ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, pages 227-228.

⁸⁸⁹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Classics of Strategy and Counsel, Vol. 1, trans. By Thomas Cleary (Boston, 2000), page 82.

Clausewitz first you must destroy the enemy's plans.⁸⁹⁰ As presented in Chapter II, by crossing the Ebro in early summer of 218, I believe Hannibal anticipated the declaration of war already resolved in Rome. While the Roman invasion force in route to Spain clearly indicates Rome's intention to fight an offensive contest on Carthaginian soil, when the Scipio brothers deployed their forces only to find that Hannibal had already crossed the Rhône and eluded them, rather than shift the army to Italy to meet the Carthaginians, Publius sailed alone for Pisa to alert Northern Italy. By crossing the Alps in a blitzkrieg, Hannibal found the Italian defenders weak, "because a surprised opponent in an unready one."⁸⁹¹ The speed and success with which he took the offensive into Italy overwhelmed Publius Scipio, now in command of two legions in the area, causing the recall of Scipio's fellow consul, Tiberius Sempronius from Sicily – and the impending invasion of Africa – to reinforce him at the Trebia. Sempronius' subsequent defeat at the Trebia closed the first year of the conflict with the Carthaginians commanding most of the territory north of the Apennines. Additionally, Hannibal's strategy of foreign assistance began to bear fruit as a host of anti-Roman Celts as well as a number who had formerly served Rome came to his side. Above all he had fulfilled the strategic purpose of averting an offensive against Carthage by concentrating Roman forces in the north, placing Rome on the defensive in Italy. The following year he continued to baffle the Romans as he eluded two of their armies posted to check his advance south, and defeated them soundly at Lake Trasimene.

The second maxim presented by Clausewitz states you must undermine the enemy's economic strength.⁸⁹² As seen with the rise in taxes and the problems facing

⁸⁹⁰ C. von Clausewitz, On War, pages 209-210.

⁸⁹¹ A. Jones, Civil War Command & Strategy, page 140.

⁸⁹² C. von Clausewitz, On War, pages 209-210.

Rome prior to Cannae, Hannibal accomplished this dictum early in the conflict. When news of the defeats at Ticinus and Trebia reached Rome, after the initial outbreak of panic, boys and even slaves were enlisted to replace the shattered armies, taxes doubled to save the sinking treasury, and the Roman Senate appointed Fabius Maximus dictator in the crisis.

Next Clausewitz affirms you must win victories which depress the national morale⁸⁹³ – Cannae could have been no more devastating to the Romans. The battle represented Hannibal's greatest hour. Although the Italian confederation remained intact, it took Cannae to begin to break the Greek cities in southern Italy from their alliance with Rome. First Arpi, in northern Apulia defected then a group of Lucanian and Bruttians broke away. Lastly Capua came to the Carthaginian side. Had he been fighting against any other nation in the ancient world there is no doubt that his overwhelming victories at Trebia, Lake Trasimene, and Cannae would have brought them to an early capitulation. Hannibal had destroyed the enemy army in three major battles; yet, Rome would not initiate terms for a peace settlement as long as Carthaginian troops under arms remained in Italy. Instead, the Romans responded to Cannae with grim resilience.

The final maxim of grand strategical design requires the occupation of the enemy's capital, which disorganizes the government, and is a visible sign to all that its cause has failed.⁸⁹⁴ Although Hannibal came within five miles of Rome's walls, he did not allow himself in the ardour of victory after Cannae to be led in a pursuit beyond what the circumstances warranted. He was as cautious after victory as other leaders after defeat for it is my contention that Hannibal had no desire to destroy Rome at any time in the conflict. To understand my conviction, let us examine his actions up to this point. In his

⁸⁹³ C. von Clausewitz, On War, pages 209-210.

⁸⁹⁴ C. von Clausewitz, On War, pages 209-210.

eagerness to win Italian friends, Hannibal had promised the defecting cities freedom from military service. Thus, he could enlist men locally only by volunteers. Hannibal was obliged to attempt further inroads into the Italian confederacy, at the same time protecting the cities in Campania and Apulia that had defected. The responsibility for his newly found allies diminished his offensive flexibility, substituting a defensive posture unlike his earlier years of success. In response the Roman government readopted the strategy of Fabius, and this time it brought results. Rome's capacity at least to win back towns in one theatre while Hannibal was in another improved morale. To fight these tactics Hannibal was compelled to divide his troops rather than act in a single well-concentrated body; at Compsa he established a new base of operations, while he sent Mago south to bring the Greek cities along the coast into submission. It became imperative for Hannibal to find alternative support for his campaign.

It is at this time I assert his plan for a second strategy emerged. In a letter to the Carthaginian senate Hannibal pushed for Carthage to re-conquer Sicily in hopes of allaying Rome's ability to use it as a staging point in an attack on Africa. In addition, if the home government in Carthage could open new fronts outside of the Italian mainland much of the pressure in Italy would be relieved. It is clear from Hannibal's point of view the idea of Carthaginian campaigns on multiple fronts was a sound strategic initiative. By signing a treaty with Philip V Hannibal further expected external support from Macedonia. The remaining thirteen years of the 2nd Roman War, Hannibal's second phase of strategy continued to match Lee's struggle against the Union forces. If he could frustrate the enemy's designs in Sardinia, Corsica, and Spain, along with the threat from Macedonia, the Roman legions would be forced to mount troops in all the areas in contest. This would ease the defensive posture Hannibal now had to assume. Just as Lee he sought to impress upon the minds of the Roman people the conviction that they must

prepare for a protracted struggle, great sacrifice of life and treasure, with the possibility that all might at last be of no avail; and to accomplish this at the smallest cost to the Carthaginians as to the Confederacy.⁸⁹⁵

Having planned a land war, Carthage never regained command of the sea. Nevertheless, after Cannae two expeditions were fitted out in Africa for Italy, one limited to cavalry reinforcements and elephants. While the smaller expedition under the command of Bomilcar slipped through to Hannibal, the larger force was diverted to Spain. Other Carthaginian troops were sent on to Sardinia and Sicily. The death of Rome's ally, Hiero of Syracuse produced widespread rebellions in Sicily, which the Carthaginians sought to exploit. With the treaty signed, hopefully, to bring Philip V of Macedon into the conflict it looked as though Hannibal's second strategy would bring success. Although the conflict continued for nearly a decade after Cannae, he remained singularly apt at guessing what his enemy would do. His marches were quick, covert, and shrewd; he acted with speed and effect. It is a tribute to Hannibal's extraordinary ability that he maintained his undefeated record in Italy as he waited for Carthage to continue its efforts on the various fronts. Basically Hannibal did follow the maxims of war; therefore the only conclusion can be that Carthage failed Hannibal not that Hannibal failed Carthage. I believe Hannibal recognized this after the battle of Metaurus because Hasdrubal was the only reinforcement possibility he had and he failed. At this point Hannibal knew he would have to return to Africa; no reinforcements for his second strategy would be forthcoming so his third strategy came into play in order to allow Carthage wanted to keep what they had. The Carthaginian government made Hannibal do exactly what they wanted him to do because they did not reinforce him.

⁸⁹⁵ C. Marshall. An Aide-de-Camp of Lee, ed. F. Maurice (New York, 1965), pages 30-32.

While it is arguable that Rome was bound to defeat Carthage in the end, was peace really a viable alternative? Only those naïve enough to think that the 2nd Roman War was merely a war of revenge can seriously imagine that another war between Carthage and Rome could have been avoided in the long term. When Hannibal was ordered back to Africa, every chance of saving Carthage or redeeming the fortunes lost after the 1st Roman War were lost. At this point his only option was again to change his war strategy to one of political diplomacy to reach the best possible resolution for Carthage. In an effort to protect his home from the devastation he had inflicted on Rome Hannibal asked for a personal conference with Scipio where he queried, according to Livy:

“So in discussing terms of peace, it is you [Scipio] who can negotiate from strength – which is precisely what you most want, and we find most unfortunate. You and I have the most to gain by peace, and our respective governments will ratify whatever terms we decide on... We do not object to leaving you in possession of everything for which we went to war – Sicily, Sardinia, Spain, and all the islands between Africa and Italy; let us be confined within the shores of Africa...”⁸⁹⁶

Although Scipio refused the conditions of Hannibal’s peace proposal and the final battle of the 2nd Roman War ensued, Hannibal managed to set the tone for future dialogue between him and Scipio. Had Hannibal won Zama, the results would have more than likely been the same, for Carthage had lost the battle years before. It was only the genius of Hannibal, which prolonged the struggle and enabled Carthage to request a more lenient settlement for peace.⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹⁶ Livy. Ad Urbe Condita. 30.30.

⁸⁹⁷ T.A. Dodge, Hannibal, page 641.

Had Carthage conquered Rome the history of the Western World would have been irretrievably changed: there would have been a Semitic heritage rather than a Graeco-Roman culture permeating the Mediterranean basin and Europe. The Carthaginians were not an imperial minded people; they were a small group of merchants, craftsmen, and seafarers. Though prosperous and powerful from their trade, they had never sought territory to colonize other than in Spain where Hamilcar Barca laid the foundations for resuming the war with Rome. If Rome had sought peace with Hannibal, it is almost certain the terms would have been merely to return Carthaginian influence to that which existed before the 1st Roman War. Hannibal and the Carthaginians both felt betrayed by the Roman expansion efforts that proved detrimental to the trading interests of their country. Whatever his enemies may have said, it is clear that Hannibal did not desire the destruction of Rome. However, like Pyrrhus, Hannibal hoped to destroy Roman hegemony in Italy. He would substitute a new Italian federation under the nominal leadership of Capua dominated by Carthage. Rome would have been rendered powerless while Carthage again became the leader of the Mediterranean, an idea far removed from the narrow mercantile ambitions of the traditional Carthaginian policy of his opponents within the senate.

Later in life Hannibal's ability as a diplomat and statesman equaled his generalship. Without his influence the Carthaginian senate almost certainly would not have accepted Scipio's terms for peace. He continued to serve his country, being its leader and devoting his great energy and skills to reconstruction. Greatness derives from heroism. Without personal contact of the commander with his men such enthusiasm cannot be fired and such heroism created. This heroism, whether in peace or war, is the anchor of a people. Hannibal and Lee possessed it, not only in the height of battle but in their devotion to their country during and after the wars. From the siege of Saguntum in

Spain in 219 B.C. until his death in 183 B.C. Hannibal had honestly, through decades of struggle, kept the oath that he had sworn when a boy. He pursued his aim with a steadfastness and singleness of purpose that makes him a real hero. Many people fall, collapse, and ultimately yield. Hannibal was able to overcome adversities until his last breath.

It is a pity that many to this day are unacquainted with Scipio's admiration for Hannibal, Lee's high regard for Grant, the sacrifices Grant made for Lee when Andrew Johnson clamoured for his imprisonment, or the Roman scorn Scipio faced after the seemingly lenient peace terms with Carthage. On his deathbed, Ulysses S. Grant wrote, "I would like to see truthful history written,"⁸⁹⁸ and that sentiment is as true today as it was 2,200 years ago with Hannibal.

Despite Roman claims, Hannibal never lost a battle until his defeat at Zama.⁸⁹⁹ Robert E. Lee's struggle against devastating odds seems to pale when compared to the strategic skill, tactical genius, and force of personality Hannibal maintained in his sixteen-year struggle against Rome, for the situation in Italy could have changed even as late as 207 if Hasdrubal had succeeded in meeting Hannibal in Umbria. Even in his last battle at Zama, Hannibal lost none of his boldness or talent. For the first three years Hannibal's skill was brilliant, the remaining thirteen an achievement in strength and purpose.⁹⁰⁰ It can be argued that it is a mark of a great general to be able to rethink radically his strategies. Although his first two strategies ultimately failed, only Hannibal could have changed his position from an offensive to a defensive posture with such ease. With his final strategy he brought not only peace to Carthage, but dignity in their failure. Finally,

⁸⁹⁸ J.G. Wilson, Life and Public Services of General Ulysses S. Grant, page 130.

⁸⁹⁹ Polybius, The Histories, 15.16.5.

⁹⁰⁰ Polybius, The Histories, 8.18.1-2 & J.F. Lazenby, Hannibal's War, page 256.

at 64 years of age, Hannibal eluded the Romans once more by taking poison, saying as he did so, "Let us free the Roman people from their long standing anxiety, seeing that they find it tedious to wait for an old man's death."⁹⁰¹ So ended the life of the man T.A. Dodge called, "the Father of Strategy."⁹⁰²

⁹⁰¹ Livy. Ab Urbe Condita. 39.51.7.

⁹⁰² T.A. Dodge. The Great Captains, page 71.

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